DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 291 815 UD 025 869

AUTHOR	Harrington, Diane
TITLE	Beyond the Four Walls: Teacher Professionalism in Action.
INSTITUTION	United Federation of Teachers, New York, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY	Gould Foundation for Children, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE	Apr 87
NOTE	60p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary School Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; Master Teachers; *Program Descriptions; *Public School Teachers; Secondary School Teachers; Substitute Teachers; Teacher Administrator Relationship; Teacher Characteristics; Teacher Education Programs; *Teacher Effectiveness; *Teacher Evaluation; Teacher Motivation; Teacher Participation; Teacher Student Relationship; *Urban Schools; *Urban Teaching
IDENTIFIERS	*Excellence in Education; New York (New York); Professionalism

ABSTRACT

In the spring of 1986 the United Federation of Teachers and the Edwin Gould Foundation for Children embarked on a six-month study, visiting schools and talking with staff about what comprises and influences teacher professionalism. This booklet presents nine case studies that illustrate teacher professionalism in actual New York City public school settings. The following schools and programs were studied: (1) PS 87--Master Teacher Intern Program; (2) Middle College High School; (3) PS 97--Committee of Concerned Educators; (4) Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics--Industrial Arts/Technology Education; (5) PS 321--Special Educator Support Program; (6) Aviation High School--Substitute Vocational Assistant Programs; (7) The Mott Hall School; (8) High School of Telecommunication Arts and Technology; and (9) IS 115--Project Basics. Most New York City public school teachers work under conditions that are far from professional. The following components of teacher professionalism were identified: (1) the individual; (2) the setting; (3) teacher schedules; (4) resource allocation; (5) support of administrators; (6) belief in the value of teacher's contributions; (7) shared educational philosophy; (8) focus on the needs of students; (9) sense of collegiality; (10) openness to experimentation; and (11) training and development. The following issues are examined: (1) professionalism, public image, and salary; (2) compensation for teachers who "go the extra mile"; (3) definition of master or mentor teacher; and (4) how to involve teachers on the periphery. Lists of preliminary recommendations and references are included. (BJV)

ED291815

A study conducted by the United Federation of Teachers
with funding from the Edwin Gould Foundation for Children

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Bert Shanas
United Federation of Teachers
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEYOND THE FOUR WALLS

teacher professionalism in action

A study conducted by the United Federation of Teachers
with funding from the Edwin Gould Foundation for Children

BEYOND THE FOUR WALLS

teacher professionalism in action

A study conducted by the United Federation of Teachers
with funding from the Edwin Gould Foundation for Children

Written by
Diane Harrington

April, 1987

©1987 United Federation of Teachers
260 Park Avenue South
New York, New York, 10010

The case studies presented in this booklet are exciting and inspiring. Here are faculties in New York City public schools, facing all the familiar urban educational problems, who have been given the freedom to grow, to draw on their individual reservoirs of expertise and creativity and ingenuity, to take on new and demanding responsibilities—and who have received whatever support and training they needed to help them do this. Not only have they welcomed these challenges; not only have they met the responsibilities and surpassed the expectations; most importantly, they have created wonderful, successful environments for their students.

The schools and programs described in this booklet are not unique. There are many, many excellent programs in the giant New York City school system. But not enough by any means. It is our hope that this study, by describing the conditions and settings that have nurtured professionalism, will inspire other staffs and supervisors to work together as colleagues to create great learning environments for youngsters.

Sincerely,

Sandra Feldman

Sandra Feldman
President

The Edwin Gould Foundation's involvement in this study of teacher professionalism has been most gratifying. As we visited the schools and programs, we found innovative practices, exciting new approaches and materials, and concerned, creative professionals. We are proud to have shared in this important effort to examine programs planned and carried out by teachers themselves. We are too easily impressed by heavily funded, grandiose schemes to the neglect of the accomplishments of teachers, those closest to the students. I hope that this booklet brings alive the commitment that exists in these schools and programs. They can be important models for others.

Schuyler M. Meyer, Jr.
President
The Edwin Gould
Foundation for Children

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people who work in the New York City public schools generously contributed their time, ideas, feelings, and professional expertise to this study. Some of them are named and quoted in the booklet; but many others, not named, made equal contributions. In special gratitude, their names follow.
The collective wisdom, expertise, and honesty of all these professionals truly made this study possible.

Harvey Abramson
Rita Adorno
Nick Aiello
Nat Belpedio
Calley Bittel
Rick Carman
Tony Cavanna
Cynthia Crump
Ira Feldman
Sarah Finnegan
Carol Friedman
Debby Gaisi
Carolyn Gibbons
Joan Goodman
Peter Goodman
Hilda Gore
Richard Gross
Naomi Hill
Mary Kelleher
Herman Levyne
Joe Livoti
Johanna Motta
Gayle Rubinstein
Barbara Schneider
April Singer
Gloria Singer
Dwight Threepersons

Project Director
David Sherman

Principal Investigators
Diane Harrington
Marjorie Wilkes

Author
Diane Harrington

Art Director
John Walton

Photographer
Maria Bastone

CONTENTS

2	Introduction
4	The Case Studies
6	PS 87 — Master Teacher Intern Program
10	Middle College High School
14	PS 97 — Committee of Concerned Educators
18	Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics — Industrial Arts/Technology Education
22	PS 321 — Special Educator Support Program
26	Aviation High School — Substitute Vocational Assistant Program
30	The Mott Hall School
34	High School of Telecommunication Arts and Technology
38	IS 115 — Project Basics
42	The Ingredients
48	The Issues
51	Recommendations
53	Further Reading
55	Schools and Programs

"Teacher professionalism means being the best teacher for the kids that you can be."

—Donna Derasmo, fourth grade teacher, Mott Hall School

INTRODUCTION

"I'm not sure that teachers, in their current state, are treated as professionals. We have examples of teachers who are acting very professionally–because of these wonderful ingredients that allow this to happen. But I think that many of our colleagues don't have these ingredients. Therefore, by definition, they would not be part of a profession at this moment in time."

—Barry Smith, social studies teacher and UFT chapter leader, Middle College High School

The issue that Barry Smith is grappling with—what makes a teacher "professional"—is one that educational leaders and writers have just begun to address. The term "teacher professionalism" has become a rallying call. Like many catchy phrases, however, even many of those who use it are not quite sure what it means.

In order to look at teacher professionalism in a fresh way, the United Federation of Teachers—the nation's largest local union of school employees, with 91,000 members—decided to examine closely some schools and school-based programs where teachers feel they act and are treated in a professional manner. Working collaboratively with the Edwin Gould Foundation for Children, the UFT embarked on a six-month study in the spring of 1986 of sites proposed by its members, visiting schools and talking with staff about the ingredients that comprise and influence teacher professionalism.

This booklet is the result of that study. At its heart are nine case studies that illustrate teacher professionalism operating in actual New York City public school settings. An analysis of common ingredients and unresolved issues follows the case studies, as do some preliminary recommendations aimed at promoting further professionalization of teaching.

In a sense, teaching is an acknowledged profession, although it is not officially designated as such in New York State. Like law and medicine, it has professional schools and degrees, state and local requirements for certification or licensing, professional literature and research. In the public schools of New York City, however, most teachers work under conditions that are far from professional. They spend much of their time in non-teaching activities such as completing paperwork, patrolling halls, supervising lunchrooms, and the like; they often work in classrooms with peeling paint or crumbling plaster; most spend hundreds of dollars out of their own pockets every year purchasing instructional supplies; access to a telephone is an unheard-of luxury; and some schools even lack a place where teachers can have a cup of coffee and talk to colleagues about their problems and successes.

The lack of professional treatment by all layers of the school system's bureaucracy is even more discouraging. Teachers have little input into how schools are run, little or no control over what

they teach or how they teach it, and almost no chance to participate in decision-making or planning. On top of all this, their salaries are inadequate.

Julie Merker, an English teacher at the High School of Telecommunication Arts and Technology, observes, "It's not that people lack the spark; it's not that they lack ideas. It's that they face daily obstacles to being professionals. That's the reality that we have to recognize, and that's the reality we have to try to change."

In conducting this study, the UFT looked for something more than excellent classroom teaching (although we looked for that, too). We looked for settings that are special because teachers are consulted when educational decisions are being made. We looked for collegiality, for sharing rather than competition among teachers and between teachers and administrators. We looked for teacher leaders—individuals and groups who are stretching the traditional notion of what it means to be a teacher. Above all, we listened to teachers and accepted their judgments that they act and are treated professionally. And we found what we looked for, as the case studies so eloquently testify.

What kind of claims can be made about the schools and programs singled out here? Are they better at educating students? Do students achieve more in these settings? The answer is not clear in all cases. Some programs have just begun; others are further along and show immense promise; and a few do indicate that what is better for teachers is better for students, too.

That is not surprising. Teacher professionalism "flows from empowering people—teachers, supervisors, everyone—to be the best they can be within the framework of the school," says Ronald Jones, UFT district representative for Community School District 15 at the time of the study and now special representative for educational programs. "This is power for a positive reason, so that everyone uses his or her potential constructively and positively, rather than using power to be in constant opposition or to hold on to turf. Then there's a community of interests in the school, and people accept each other's professionalism—be they teachers, supervisors, paraprofessionals, secretaries, or counselors—for the betterment of the school." ■

Phyllis Bilys and students, PS 321

THE CASE STUDIES

All of the schools and programs have one thing in common: teachers have the opportunity to play new roles, to be leaders beyond the four walls of their classrooms.

Nine schools and school-based programs, all part of the New York City public school system, are presented here as case studies illustrating teacher professionalism. The term "case study" is used quite deliberately. These schools and programs are examples, not exemplars. They are all very special places, but they are certainly not the only examples of teacher professionalism in action in the New York City public schools; nor are they presented as the best examples. They are included because, according to teachers, professionalism exists there.

The case studies are varied. They include:

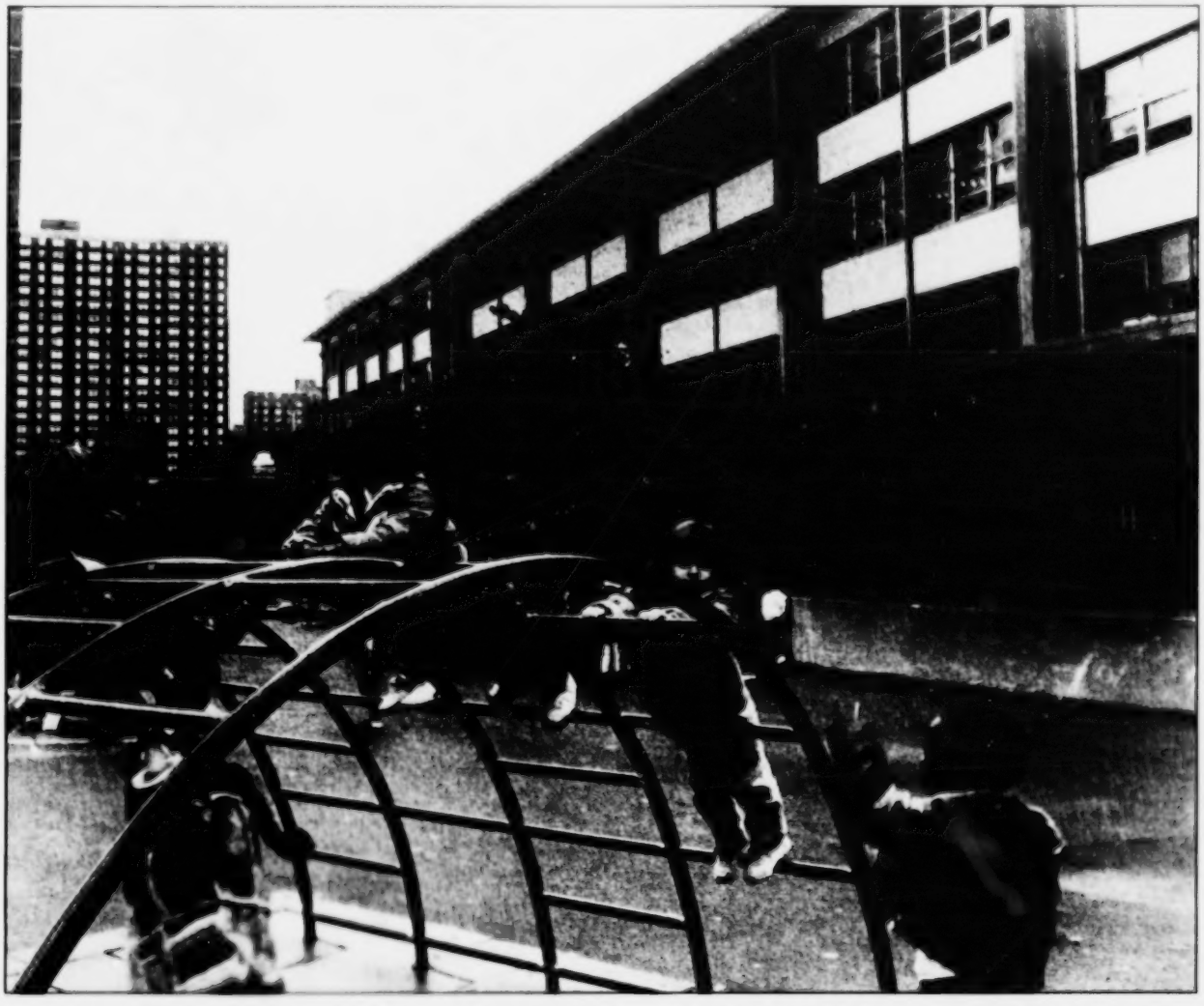
- all school levels—elementary, middle, and high schools;
- "regular" as well as "alternative" or "redesigned" schools;*
- a range of student ethnicity and socio-economic levels;
- differing student ability and achievement levels.

* In New York City, eleven small "alternative" high schools have been established for students at risk of dropping out of school. A number of failing high schools have been "redesigned," establishing new academic programs, often thematic, as well as new school structures and procedures.

In the pages that follow, we will visit Manhattan's Lower East Side, where a mix of poor Hispanic, Chinese, and other minority children go to school together and where many of the city's 11,000 homeless children are put up in shabby hotels and shelters. We will also visit Brooklyn's Park Slope, where middle- and upper-middle-class families live in elegant 19th-century brownstones. In some schools, professionalism lives in almost every classroom; in others, a small group of teachers is struggling to establish higher standards and new ways of doing things.

All of the schools and programs, however, have one thing in common: teachers have the opportunity to play new roles, to be leaders beyond the four walls of their classrooms. The roles, like the schools and programs, are varied. In some cases, teachers participate in planning, administering, or evaluating the school or the program; in others, they develop new instructional approaches or materials; in still others, they design their own training; in one, they evaluate each other; and, in a few, they are part of every aspect of the school's decision-making process.

In every case, it is the teachers themselves who describe their roles as "professional." They talk about "how it used to be;" about their sense of empowerment, of being freed to do what they always wanted to do; about their own growth and its benefits to their students. Their passion reverberates powerfully from school to school, classroom to classroom. As one teacher says, "It is a process of healthy and effective interaction that allows a teacher to act with dignity, self-esteem, and pride in his or her professional role." ■



"This is a grass roots program. It comes from teachers who want to stay teachers."
—Anna Switzer, kindergarten teacher

PS 87
Community School District 3
Manhattan

Mentor Teacher Intern Program

"Our message to other teachers is: you can be an educational leader in the classroom. We don't want to leave the classroom. This is what we love and what we're good at."
—Paul Schwarz, first grade teacher

While policymakers and school administrators debate approaches to staff development, which all agree is desperately needed, two early childhood teachers at PS 87 have acted. Anna Switzer, a kindergarten teacher, and Paul Schwarz, a first grade teacher, have designed a program in which they will provide ongoing training for a year to eight less experienced teachers from their school district—without taking any of them out of the classroom! With quiet but articulate persistence, they have convinced the school district to bear most of the cost (a little over $16,000) and have also received support from the New York Community Trust, the New World Foundation, and Bank Street College.

Their program, the ***Mentor Teacher Intern Program***, started in September, 1986. Each interning teacher will spend twelve days in Switzer's or Schwarz's classroom, spread over four three-day residencies. During these residencies, the district will pay for substitutes to cover each intern's class. Switzer and Schwarz will also visit the interns' classrooms to provide support and follow-up, again with substitute coverage paid for by the district. In addition, all of the interns will participate in a weekly after-school seminar, taught jointly by Switzer and Schwarz. Throughout this process, an outside evaluator (perhaps from the Educational Testing Service) will assess the effects of the program and determine which aspects can be replicated or expanded. "This is a pilot program," says Schwarz, "because we really *do* have questions."

Both Switzer and Schwarz have taught for many years; both have left the classroom for other jobs, but have come back. "I am a professional first grade teacher," says Schwarz. "That is what I am, and I'm proud of it." Their motivation for designing this program, which evolved over a full year, was complex. As veteran teachers, they felt the need to find new ways to grow and be stimulated themselves. "That has already worked," says Switzer. "We're already thinking about our classrooms in new ways. And when you have to think about what you do, you get better."

In addition, they were searching for more collegiality with fellow teachers. Since the program is designed for teachers with at least three years of experience who have made a commitment to the profession and have volunteered for extra training, Switzer and Schwarz see their relationship with the interns as collegial rather than judgmental. "We *know* that we have something to teach people,"

says Schwarz, "but it's important to treat teachers differently at different stages of their professional development. You can't treat someone who has been teaching for three years and has made a commitment to improving his or her skills the same way you treat a first-year teacher who is only concerned with survival." Switzer adds: "We see ourselves as models, setting up an intimate connection or relationship with the interns, showing them that they can continue to grow and be leaders without leaving the classroom."

Both Switzer and Schwarz are experienced teacher trainers and adult educators, too, having taught numerous school and district workshops as well as graduate courses at local colleges and universities. They found themselves frustrated with the lack of follow-through in workshops and courses, even those with several sessions. Convinced that learning about teaching made no sense when divorced from the context of the classroom, they searched for a way to connect the two. "We have studied ourselves as teachers," says Schwarz, "and we're committed to working with adults. We're skilled at that and we want to do it."

What will happen during the program's first year? There is, of course, no certain answer to that question. The program is welcomed enthusiastically by principal and staff at PS 87, which is a well-run school in the midst of Manhattan's gentrified Upper West Side. In fact, a similar program for upper grade teachers is in the process of being developed there. Switzer and Schwarz selected the eight interns, aiming for two from each of four schools so that the interns could provide support for each other in their

"home" schools. They have also gathered wide-ranging endorsements and stirred up quite a bit of interest, among, for example, the leadership of their school and district, the central Board of Education, the United Federation of Teachers, and several foundations and universities. They also have insisted that the program remain small, at least for the first year, so that issues and problems can be carefully examined.

Some issues are already clear. One is the very concept of "mentor teacher": how is this defined and who does the defining? Switzer and Schwarz have some answers. "Other teachers call you that and come to you for help," says Switzer. Schwarz adds: "It's not enough to be a good teacher. You also need experience as a teacher trainer."

Another issue is the toll this program will exact from Switzer and Schwarz. "We'll really be doing two jobs," says Switzer, "being classroom teachers and teacher trainers at the same time. We don't know how that will work out."

Still, Switzer and Schwarz, and others who have heard about what they are doing, are excited. "The issue," Schwarz points out, "is not just getting quality people into the profession. The real issue is: where will they be 10 or 15 years from now? People shouldn't have to be embarrassed to say: I'm a teacher." Switzer agrees: "Perhaps our program will give hope to other teachers."

If nothing else happens, says Schwarz, "I think that a couple of teachers will come out saying: I can do it better. Some children in a couple of classrooms in the city will have a little bit better deal. That's really something." ■

"I am a professional first grade teacher. That is what I am, and I'm proud of it."

—Paul Schwarz, first grade teacher

MIDDLE COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

Queens

You don't really enter this high school. You enter the main building of La Guardia Community College and take a left. The office is just down the hall, but it is not like most public high school offices. It is noisy, informal, and crowded (although quite large) because three or four meetings, a counseling session with a student, a conference with parents, and several lively conversations are happening simultaneously. This is the hub of ***Middle College High School***, a showcase example of New York City's public alternative high schools. Actually, it is now two high schools. ***The International High School***, run by an assistant principal under the jurisdiction of Middle College's principal, opened in the fall of 1985 across the street in another LaGuardia building. The schools are run jointly by the college (part of the City University of New York) and the New York City Board of Education.

Both schools serve "at-risk" students. The International High School admitted its first class of 70 tenth graders in September, 1985. All are recent immigrants with limited proficiency in English. They come from 26 countries and speak 16 different languages. Middle College, which opened in 1974, includes 450 tenth through twelfth graders who have been referred here as dropouts or potential dropouts. They have a history of multiple academic failures, repeated absenteeism or truancy, or social, emotional, or family-related problems. Before being accepted at Middle College, they are interviewed by students already in the school.

"We're working with kids who are high risk and might slip through the cracks somewhere else," says Barry Smith, a social studies teacher and the UFT chapter leader, who came from a large vocational high school in 1984. "This is an educational environment that nourishes, and it is staggeringly successful." In 1984-85, for example, the dropout rate here was only 5.8%, in comparison with an annual rate of 9.4% for all public high schools in the city.

"What this school is about is empowerment for kids *and* teachers," says principal Cecilia Cullen. The flip side of empowerment is responsibility, and stu-

"Here you have an opportunity to reach your potential. It's the same role without the usual constraints."

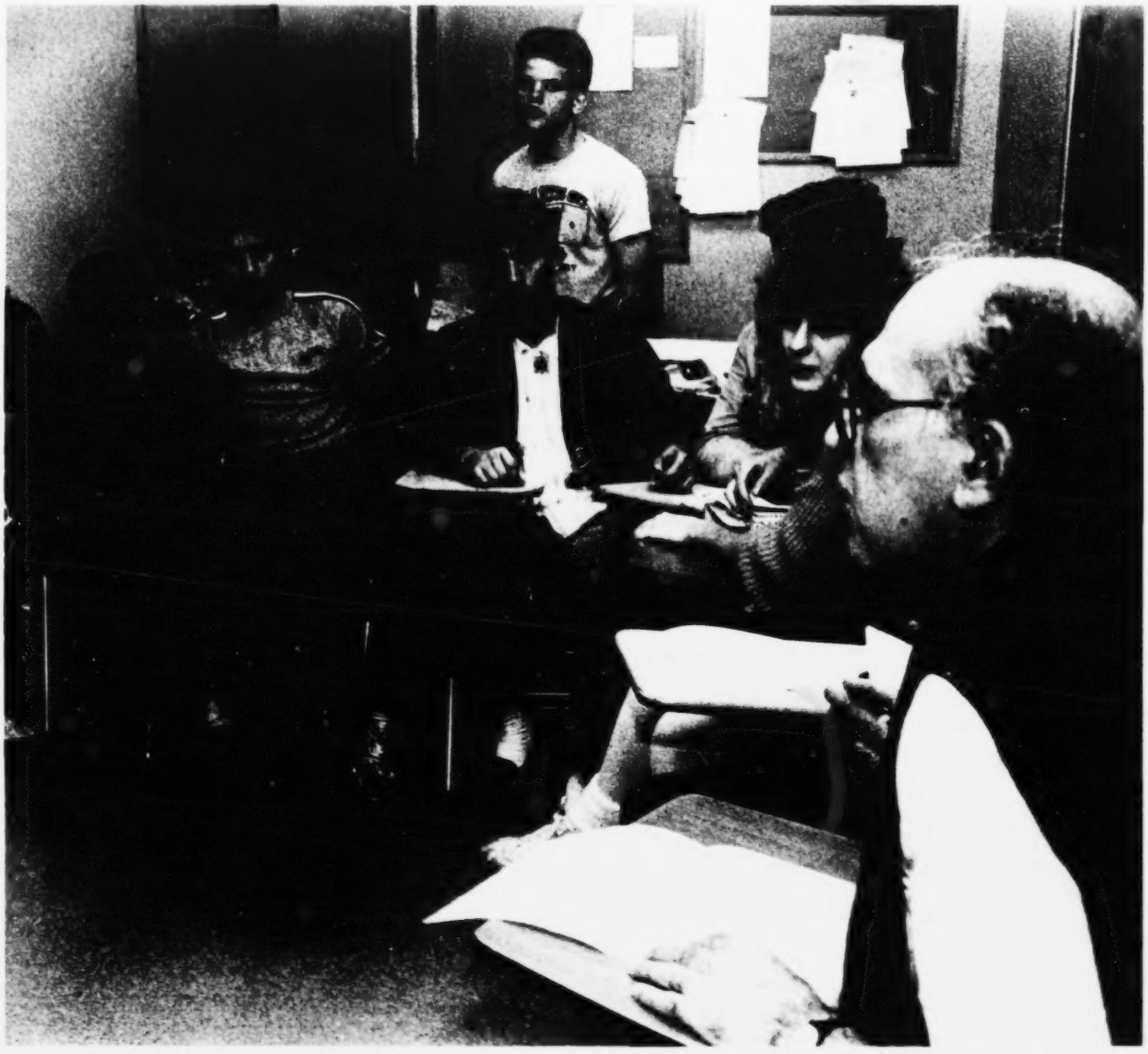
—Barry Smith, social studies teacher and UFT chapter leader

dents demonstrate their understanding of this in confidential meetings of the student government. Student representatives hear the cases of fellow students with serious academic or attendance problems referred to them by the principal they call "Cece." (Everyone is on a first-name basis at Middle College.) "Don't you know you're responsible for what you do here?" one student asks his peer. "We will hold you responsible. Don't tell us you'll do something and then not do it."

Teacher Joe Sidoti and students set up the student government in the winter of 1986. It is but one example of the many teacher-initiated programs at Middle College. Teachers are encouraged—even expected—to come up with original solutions to whatever problems they see.

"The overall driving ethic here is caring," says Smith. "We care about the school and about each other." In fact, says guidance counselor Don Freeman, "There is a strong guidance approach throughout the school."

Each student is assigned to a "house"—the name used here instead of homeroom or official class—where he or she remains, with the same teacher, for his or her entire tenure in the school. House teachers get to know these students and their families very well, calling home whenever one is absent more than two days in a row and serving as informal counselors when needed. For the most troubled students, the school's five guidance counselors



Joe Sidoti and members of student government

conduct small groups daily. Some students are counseled by peer counselors, students who are carefully trained after being recommended by teachers and other students.

In addition, Freeman and fellow counselor Linda Siegmund came up with the idea of running a monthly parent support group at night. It has been so successful that, according to Siegmund, students push their parents to attend. "This school has a very complete counseling program, which is more than guidance," she says. "Inclusion, affection, and control—that is what these kids lack and what they get here."

Students also get a creative, demanding, and practical academic program at Middle College, enrolling in unique courses designed by their teachers. The school year is divided into trimesters, called cycles. During one cycle every year, each student participates in a credit-bearing community service internship, working at such sites as a hospital, public school, or lawyer's office—sites found by career education teachers. Students select their own placements from a catalogue that lists the qualifications needed and the responsibilities involved in each. Before choosing a placement, however, all students participate in career exploration, work readiness, and decision-making classes. Cathy Vaglio, a computer and career education teacher, has designed a unique decision-making course, for example, that uses computer applications to help students prepare to make career choices.

An intriguing interdisciplinary course developed by science teacher Paul Jablon and English teacher Terry Born is called the Bongo Theater Traveling Herd. It has involved hundreds of students in the eight years since it started. Jablon and Born design the content of the course differently each cycle. It offers students three credits in varying subjects—a combination of English, social studies, science, career education, or even physical education. During half of the cycle, students learn about a particular topic in depth; during the other half, they write and produce an original full-length play exploring that topic. Even the product varies:

"Eric Nadelstern, our assistant principal, asked us: What do you need to teach? You as the professionals know who your students are, what they need, what's interesting to you and to them."

—Marsha Slater, English teacher, International High School

during one cycle, for example, students produced an oral history book about the borough of Queens (although they did also write and produce a play). Complex topics like genetic engineering, medieval history, and Eastern philosophies result in plays that have twice won the Young Playwrights Award from the Writers Guild.

"What we do is look at a subject from the students' point of view," says Jablon. "We try to personalize it and to include the social context. We tell them that their play should have an impact on other people. It can be fun, but not frivolous." The students perform at other local high schools, after having given workshops to prepare students there for watching live theater.

Barry Smith developed another award-winning course at Middle College—one in economics designed with the help of La Guardia College faculty. Smith's learning guides approach economics in a "hands-on" way, and are constantly evolving as each new group of students completes the course. As a final project, each student selects a particular small business, interviews someone in authority there (using more than 40 questions prepared by the class), then writes up the interview and a personal evaluation of the business. The success of this approach "has changed my whole attitude toward teaching," says Smith.

The International High School is a still evolving version of Middle College with a multicultural essence. The students arrive with very mixed skills. "Some are literate and others are illiterate," says Marsha Slater, an experienced English teacher with a master's degree in anthropology. "We put them all together, which is very unusual in ESL [English as a second language] programs. What we do here is teach the content areas and the language skills in all classes." With 16 different native languages, says Slater, "English is our *lingua franca*. Everyone uses English to teach and help each other."

As at Middle College, the school year is divided into three cycles, and all students participate in internships. In their academic classes, student projects are emphasized. Slater, for example, has experimented with putting her students in front of computers to write—in some cases before they have even mastered the Roman alphabet. Helping each other with both computer and language skills, and producing reams of drafts, the student publish their own magazines. Slater also contributes. "A teacher is a model and a peer," she says. "I write in class, too, and so does the paraprofessional."

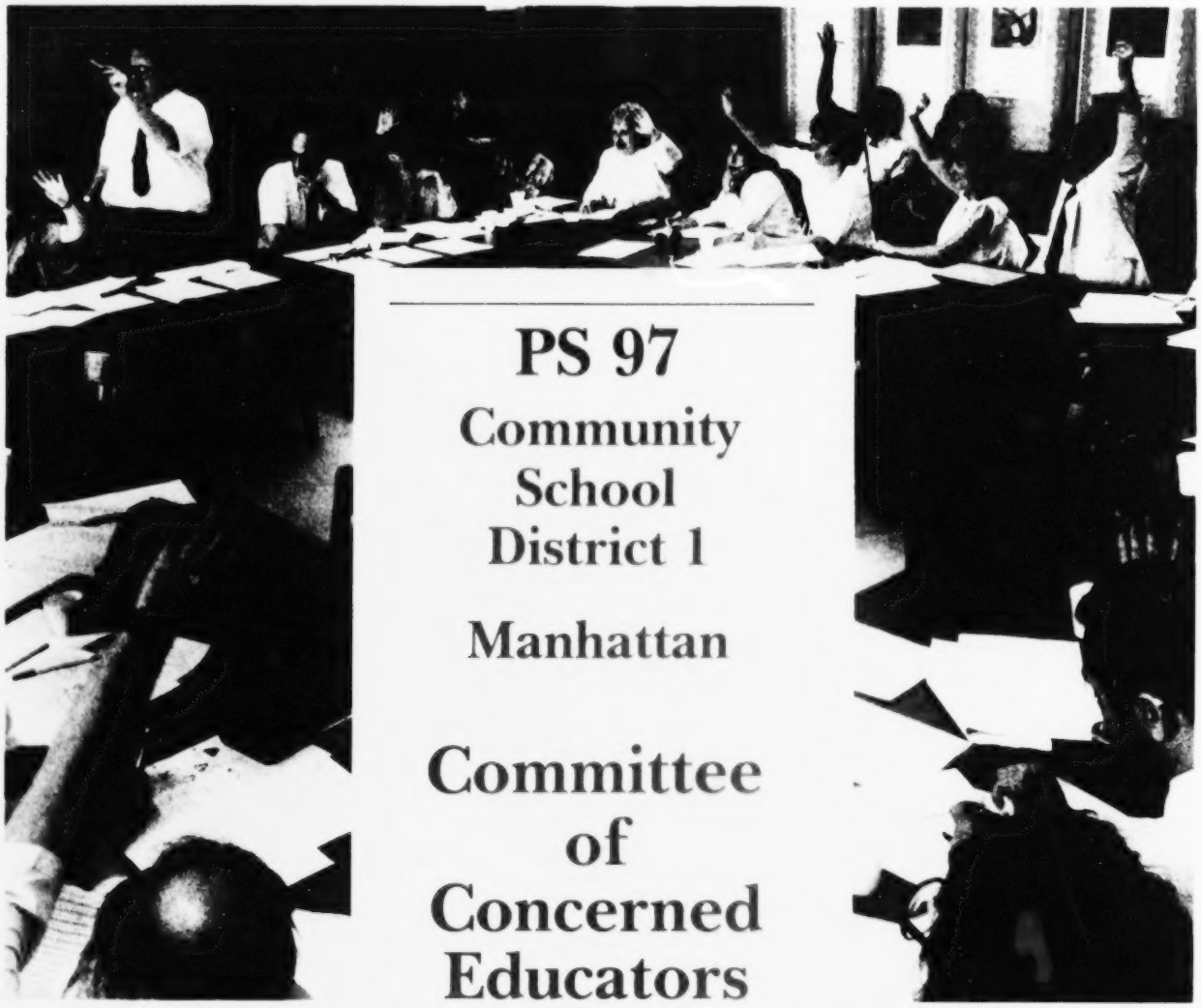
Two of Slater's classes put together the school's first yearbook, given out in September, 1986. "The yearbook is really a journal of the year. Everyone who's had anything to do with the school wrote an entry, anything they wanted, describing their interaction with the school," says Slater.

Passion and intensity are evident in Slater's description of her first year at International High School; also self-respect, respect for her colleagues, and respect for her students. She is rushed, however, looking at her watch every few minutes to make sure she isn't late for her next class. It is the same with the teachers at Middle College High School. Barry Smith, Cathy Vaglio, Paul Jablon, Don Freeman, Linda Siegmund, and other teachers are committed to their students first. Their pride in what they do comes from the growth they see among the troubled youngsters they work with.

Middle College nurtures these feelings, according to Cullen: "The school system has to treat teachers differently. Schools are very authoritarian. Bells, time cards, all of that demoralize many because of the few who take advantage. Here each teacher takes responsibility for him or herself." ■

"The school system has to treat teachers differently. Schools are very authoritarian. Bells, time cards, all of that demoralize many because of the few who take advantage. Here each teacher takes responsibility for him or herself."

—Cecilia Cullen, principal



PS 97
Community School District 1
Manhattan

Committee of Concerned Educators

The group is noisy and friendly. Individuals come in, call to their friends, gather lunch from the front table, and find a place to sit in this comfortable classroom turned conference room. This is a meeting of the ***Committee of Concerned Educators***, a group of teachers, administrators, district office staff, and union representatives in Community School District 1. This district, which comprises the mostly poor melting pot of Lower Manhattan, was extremely volatile and polarized during New York City's debates over community control of the public schools in the late 1960s. Now, after several years of solid and stable management, the district—which many educators thought was doomed—has become a leader in educational innovation.

This is March, 1986, and the committee has been meeting for more than a year. It includes at least one representative from every elementary and junior high school in the district. Today, it is meeting to discuss each school's progress in developing its own customized staff development plan. The big news is that one school, PS 97, has already conducted a half-day of staff development planned and delivered by teachers.

Bernard Mecklowitz, the district superintendent, calls the meeting to order when everyone has finished eating. He is warm and relaxed, making frequent jokes, but passionately earnest when talking about the principles of this committee. "This is not lip service. It's for real," he interjects at one point, stressing the point that "we want to hear from teachers. We *do* place value on the people working for us."

School representatives report on the progress of planning for a

half day of staff development in each school, at the district's expense. Decisions—such as workshop topics, whether to have one or several workshops, the date of the half day, who should be workshop leaders, and so forth—are all being made by the teachers in each school. Schools are at different points in the planning process, but representatives are enthusiastic about teachers' reactions.

"Morale has improved because of this," reports one teacher representative. "People are appreciative that their needs are being addressed," adds another. A third says, "So many more people are giving up time because they feel they're really working on something for the school." Mecklowitz again stresses, "You really *do* have the capacity to do staff development as your staff wants it."

PS 97's two representatives report on the staff development half day at their school. "They just want more," says Phyllis Zaverz, the UFT chapter leader. "It's because they planned it, chose the topics and the facilitators," adds Carol Duke, a teacher consultant from the Special Educator Support Program (SESP).

Zaverz and Duke planned the teacher-selected workshops at their school on the afternoon of February 24. "My being here in the school helped it happen first here," Duke says later at the school's SESP Staff Resource Center. "I was already involved in the collaborative process advocated by the committee. It's what we do all the time. I had already done a needs assessment, so we were ready to go."

Teachers selected three workshops: on learning centers, learning styles, and positive phrasing.

"Empowerment is what this is really about. Teachers in this district felt put upon and demoralized by the [state's] goal process.... Now people meet voluntarily and give up lunches and preps to work on this."

—Carol Duke, SESP teacher consultant and member of the committee

"I'm going to tell you something supervisors haven't told you before. It's your project. Make it the way you want to make it."

—Bernard Mecklowitz, superintendent, Community School District 1

"Since then," says Duke, "I've been offering lunchtime workshops on the topics people missed, as well as follow-up workshops that people have requested. Involvement in the Staff Resource Center has really increased." Adds Zaverz, "Staff involvement in things like the school's goals committee has increased, too. People see that they can effect change."

Superintendent Mecklowitz formed the Committee of Concerned Educators during the 1984-85 school year. He directed all schools in the district to free their representatives one afternoon a month to enable them to attend meetings. Representatives of the New York Urban Coalition, the Community Service Society, the UFT, and the Council of Supervisors and Administrators were also invited to participate.

The committee's first tangible accomplishment was a district-wide staff development half day on October 23, 1985. Dozens of workshops were offered in sites all over the district. The district office staff coordinated the movement of hundreds of staff members to the right schools and the right rooms at the right times. It worked! Workshop topics were based upon surveys of what teachers wanted—information about drug abuse, child abuse, and classroom management, for example—and reflected a widespread concern with the needs of their students. Response from the participants was very positive, but they were hungry for more. As a result, the committee saw that its work was only beginning. It was time to focus on school-based staff development: workshops planned by the teachers in each

school to meet their own self-perceived needs.

"Empowerment is what this is really about," says Duke. "Teachers in this district felt put upon and demoralized by the goals process of CSIP* and CAR**. Now people meet voluntarily and give up lunches and preps to work on this. They're organizing on their own to do things for the school."

Some members of the Committee of Concerned Educators were skeptical when the committee was first formed. "The district-wide half day turned people around," Duke points out. "In the following meetings, as people made reports on school-based efforts, they began to believe this was real. It varies from school to school, of course, but more and more teachers are aware of the committee this year."

At its final meeting of the school year, in June, 1986, the Committee of Concerned Educators talks about its two-day retreat earlier in the month. "I thought the retreat was a terrific experience," says one teacher. "I felt like a professional. I felt that the district really is making a commitment to the teachers, not just talking about it."

Plans are now under way for formalizing the committee. Emotions are high as members debate the issue of school-based elections. Why? It is clear that members want to expand the committee in a democratic fashion; but it is equally clear that everyone wants to stay on the committee. These debates are the most eloquent testimony of all to the fact that staff development in Community School District 1 is "owned" by the staff being developed. ■

* Comprehensive School Improvement Process, a step-by-step process for developing a school improvement plan. All school staff are expected to be involved in CSIP, which the State Education Department mandated for all schools cited on its Comprehensive Assessment Report.

** Comprehensive Assessment Report, issued by the New York State Education Department in November, 1985. It listed hundreds of public schools in New York City and throughout the state as below standard.

"Veteran teachers who questioned the value of educational reform are thrilled with what's happening in District 1. Someone is asking for their input. They're not just automatons anymore."

—Abe Ruda, UFT district representative, District 1, at the time of this study and now Bronx borough representative

P.S. 137, location of Community School District 1 office

MANHATTAN CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

"Coming here gave me room for incredible professional growth."
—Harvey Kaye, industrial arts teacher and assistant principal

Manhattan

Industrial Arts/ Technology Education

"All we did was nurture this guy: give him space and time and some money."
—Cole Genn, former principal

East Harlem School, In First Graduation, Sees Dreams Thrive," read a front-page headline in the *New York Times* on June 30, 1986. What was newsworthy enough about the first graduating class at Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics to merit front-page coverage in the *Times*? For one thing, all but one of the 143 students in its first ninth grade class in September, 1982, received diplomas—the lowest dropout rate of any high school in a city where nearly one out of every ten high school students drops out every year.* Not only that, but every single graduate planned to attend college, including such prestigious institutions as Yale, Amherst, MIT, Johns Hopkins, and Hunter.

Geniuses all? No, the products of an innovative approach to education. Manhattan Center's students are not those who could have gone to New York City's elite competitive high schools. The first of the city's redesigned high schools, Manhattan Center replaced Benjamin Franklin, which had been troubled and unsuccessful. And the students at Manhattan Center are mostly from the same surrounding neighborhood of East Harlem. "This is a place for kids who didn't make the specialized high schools but are decent students," says Cole Genn, principal at the time of this study and now assistant superintendent of Community School District 4. "In fact, 25% of our students are reading below grade level. Here these students can major in math, science, and technology and go to college in decent shape."

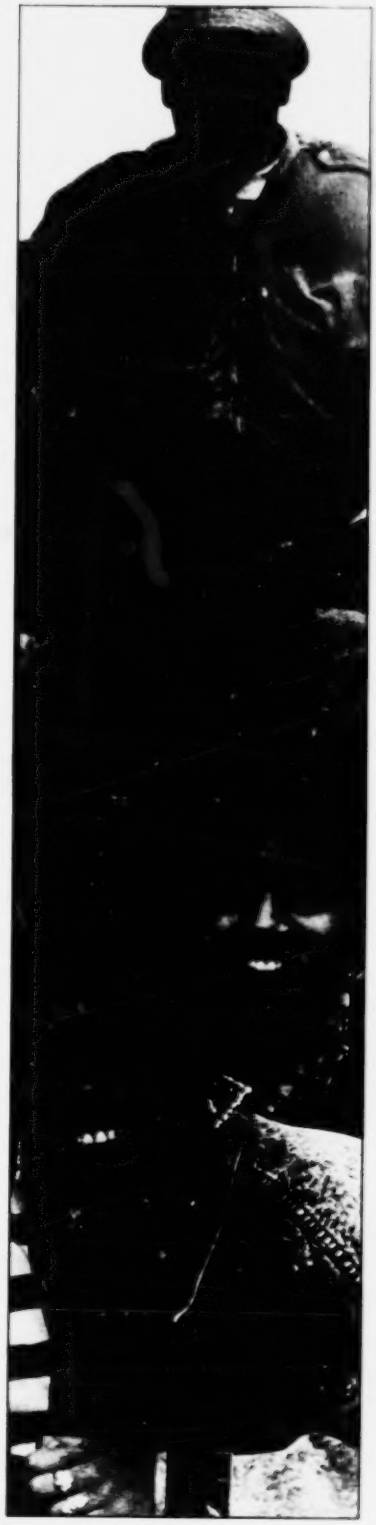
One program that exemplifies the academic rigor of Manhattan Center is ***Industrial Arts/Technology Education.*** This program was developed by a single teacher, Harvey Kaye, now assistant prin-

* New York City's annual dropout rate for high schools in 1984-85 was 9.4%, which translates into 32.5% over four years.

cipal of industrial and fine arts. Kaye was part of the planning committee that created Manhattan Center during the summer of 1982, and, in the beginning, he was the *only* industrial arts teacher in the school. What is now a flourishing department—with five additional teachers, a core of courses taken by every one of the school's 1,100 students, and five advanced courses for those with particular interest or aptitude in technology—began with a single course in technical drawing. "When I came here," says Kaye, "I taught every single student in the school. The question was: What was I going to do with them? There was no equipment. There were shops without even a screwdriver in them, but totally filled with junk. The only resource we had in the school was sets of drawing books that had never been opened."

Kaye's response was to get busy. On afternoons and weekends, he cleared out the junk and sanded desks. He convinced the Board of Education's Bureau of Supplies to part with drawing boards, T-squares, triangles, and pencils. He found out that the High School of Art and Design was throwing away technical drawing desks and, with the help of principal Genn, rented a tractor trailer, picked up the desks, and carried them into the newly cleaned-out shop. With equal ingenuity, he created a small electronics lab course in the second semester and set up a darkroom for a photography course in the fall of 1983. To do the latter, as Kaye tells the story, he had to learn to negotiate the bureaucracy.

"People from the central Board of Education came to see what I had done. They were pleased and offered to fix up the woodworking shop for us. I said I'd rather they fixed up the old darkroom. They finally agreed on the condition that I get all the bids myself. So I did it: I figured out by myself how to do a sealed bidding process, wrote proposals, got the bids, and wrote the purchase orders. And I got $15,000 worth of equipment for $8,000!" After two weeks in the summer cleaning out the room and setting it up, he also had a functioning darkroom for his students.



Even more important than the "sweat equity" Kaye put into his program, however, was his pioneering redefinition of the field of industrial arts. "What I was doing in 1982 is now recognized at both the state and city level," he says. What he did seems obvious: infusing modern technology into a field that was oriented to an outdated industrial workplace.

For example, one of the three semester-long courses in industrial arts/technology required of all Manhattan Center students is "Introduction to Occupations." This familiarizes students with the working world in a "hands-on" way: They establish mini-businesses and produce saleable products. Modern technology is integral to the course, which touches on all the major elements of technology education. In addition, the course meets the standards of the recent New York State Regents Action Plan.*

As Kaye points out, "We're one of very few high schools in New York City that will be able to offer the technology sequence recommended in the Regents Action Plan."

* Regents Action Plan: a statewide plan to set higher standards for teachers and students. It began to go into effect in September, 1985.

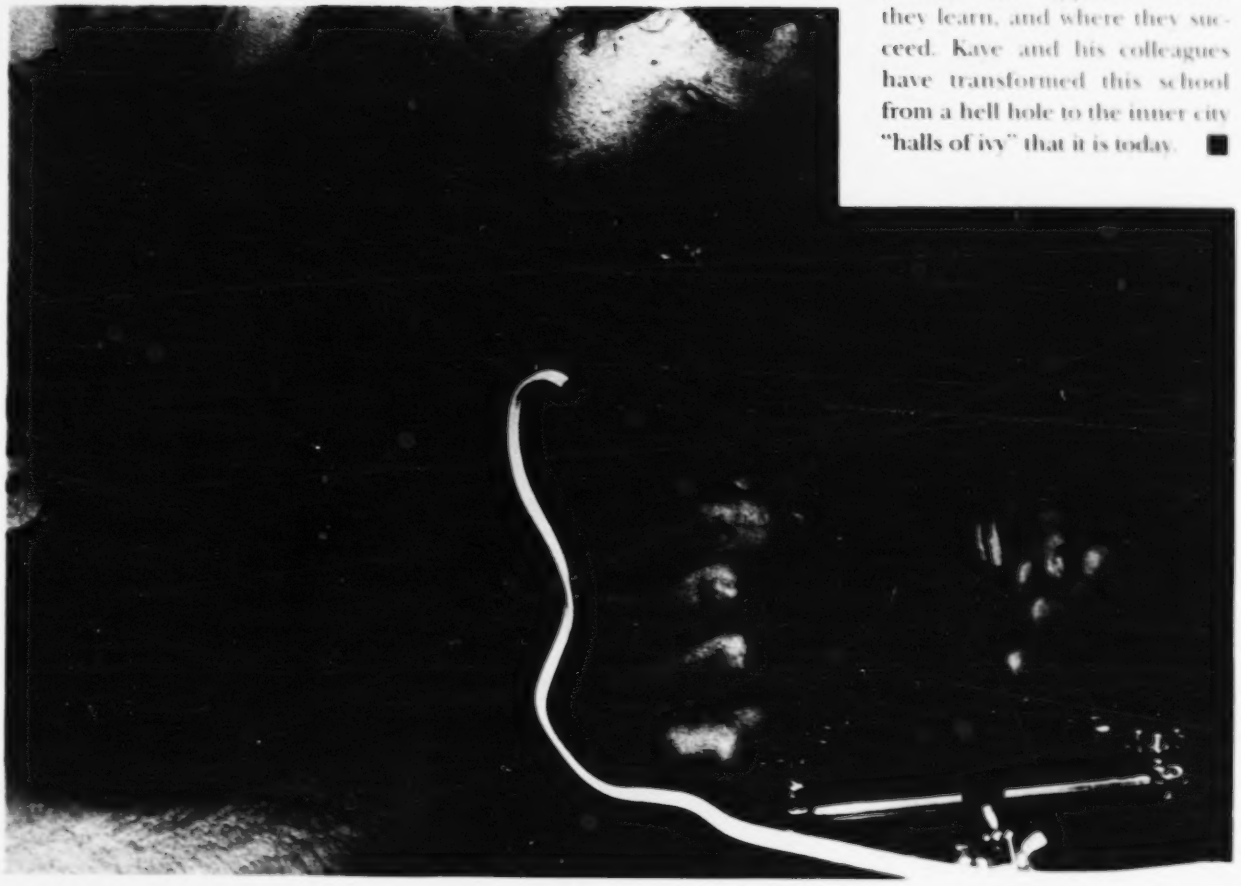
It is now routine at Manhattan Center to see students building electronic circuits and figuring out how they work, or using sophisticated computers and robots, or producing advanced multimedia presentations, or developing original architectural drawings with the aid of computers.

The school, which is jointly run by the central Board of Education (which administers all of the city's high schools) and Community School District 4 (which administers the local elementary and junior high schools), has a longer school day than most high schools. All students take one extra academic course each semester. Thus, by their junior and senior years, students who have been successful have room for extra electives. "We push kids," says Genn, "but we also have a warm atmosphere. When a student has problems, we know it right away. We provide a place where educational growth is really supported."

"I always see Harvey here in the office helping individual students," says a colleague in the department. In late May, 1986, for example, four students attended the state conference of the American Industrial Arts Students' Association in Oswego, New York. They returned with four trophies. The Board of Education paid for their air fare, the school's student government paid for their room and board, and Kaye paid for the insurance and cab fares. "It required an incredible amount of paperwork just to do this," says Kaye, "but it was worth it. Before they went, I said: I don't care if you win or don't win. The most important thing is that you enjoy yourselves and

behave properly. Their chaperone on the trip, a friend of mine, said they were models while they were there. That's what I'm really proud of."

Harvey Kave is only one of Manhattan Center's many extraordinary teachers. His efforts, multiplied by the efforts of others, have made this school what it is: a place where students are pushed and supported, where they learn, and where they succeed. Kave and his colleagues have transformed this school from a hell hole to the inner city "halls of ivy" that it is today. ■



PS 321 Community School District 15 Brooklyn

Special Educator Support Program

The coffee pot is full; sun warms the room; and a young teacher sifts through a stack of classroom materials. "He's a substitute," whispers Fran Colletti, anxious not to disturb his reading, "and he came in here to find some materials to use in his class today." Colletti is the teacher consultant at this Staff Resource Center in a Brooklyn elementary school. She, like other teacher consultants at centers throughout New York City, is here two full days a week to work with the school's staff. "The Center is a place to talk about teaching. Teachers don't gripe here because they're in a room where there are a lot of alternatives," Colletti says.

Two teacher mentors—classroom teachers who are released from classes one period a day—coordinate most of the day-to-day activities in the Center. "I want to stay in the classroom," says one, Leslie Zackman, "but I have always enjoyed working with other teachers. I like sharing and learning from others." Zackman, like fellow teacher mentor Brenda Long-Fladger, is a special education resource room teacher. Both work with small groups of children pulled from their regular classrooms for individual help. Thus, they were accustomed to working with many of the school's teachers even before becoming teacher mentors. Both are also seasoned teachers: Zackman has taught 12 years; Long-Fladger, 15.

Zackman, Long-Fladger, and Colletti are a team replicated in schools throughout New York City's five boroughs as part of the ***Special Educator Support Program***

Leslie Zackman and Brenda Long-Fladger conferring with a colleague

(SESP). This school-based program is run by the United Federation of Teachers with funding from the New York State Education Department. The program enables teachers to play an active role in their own professional development; it helps them become better teachers and develop leadership capacity. Participation is voluntary, for teachers as well as for schools and school districts. Despite its name, the program is for all of the staff in a school, "regular" as well as "special" education. "One of our goals," says Colletti, "is to bring the two together. This is a center for *all* teachers." Throughout the morning, her claim is substantiated by the number and variety of teachers who drop in to borrow or return materials, share information, or relate stories from their classrooms.

This particular Staff Resource Center opened in May, 1983, after meetings with the superintendent of Community School District 15, the UFT district representative, and the school's principal, and after teachers in PS 321 voted to have the program. SESP looks for schools where there is a need for the program, a willing principal, and teacher interest. "The principal here, Bill Casey, is very supportive," says Helen Pearlstein, the UFT chapter leader. "He comes to me and to the Center to discuss professional issues."

Located on the edge of the elegant Park Slope section of Brooklyn, PS 321 was considered a good school when the Center opened its doors. It houses an unusual student population, an almost 50/50 mix of middle class and poor students. "What I found here," says Colletti, "was a lot of excellent teachers doing innovative things behind closed doors. Some felt isolated and competitive. What we've managed to do is tap the resources that were here and get the teachers to share instead of compete. We've really built a sense of collegiality in the school."

SESP offers individual help, lunchtime workshops on topics of interest to the staff, after-school courses for college or in-service credit, and citywide or district-based training conferences to teachers in each school with a Staff Resource Center. Activities vary from school to school, depending upon the needs and interests defined by teachers.

"We use a variety of strategies to get people involved," Colletti says. "Sometimes building a personal relationship with a teacher, just talking and listening, gives us an opportunity to offer help. Sometimes we interest people through materials. Sometimes we can help when there's a problem that affects everyone, like the reduction of prep periods at PS 321 this year.* Sometimes we can reach a teacher through his or her paraprofessional. We always look for some way to really be helpful to the teacher. Our philosophy is that this program is voluntary and collegial. We provide an environment where people want to be and where they feel safe enough to ask for support."

Despite its emphasis on collegiality—or perhaps because of it—the Staff Resource Center is much more than a place to have coffee and look for interesting materials. The professional opportunities it offers to teachers open up their careers in many ways. In addition to offering school-based training, for example, teacher consultants

* PS 321 lost its Chapter 1 low-income status when the middle class student population tipped slightly over half and, with that status, the extra preparation time

"There's an arena here in the Center. It's okay to be involved. The teachers here are in charge of their own staff development."
—Fran Colletti, teacher consultant

"I applied for this position because I was looking for a channel to advance my career."
—Brenda Long-Fladger, teacher mentor

"I want to stay in the classroom, but I have always enjoyed working with other teachers. I like sharing and learning from others."

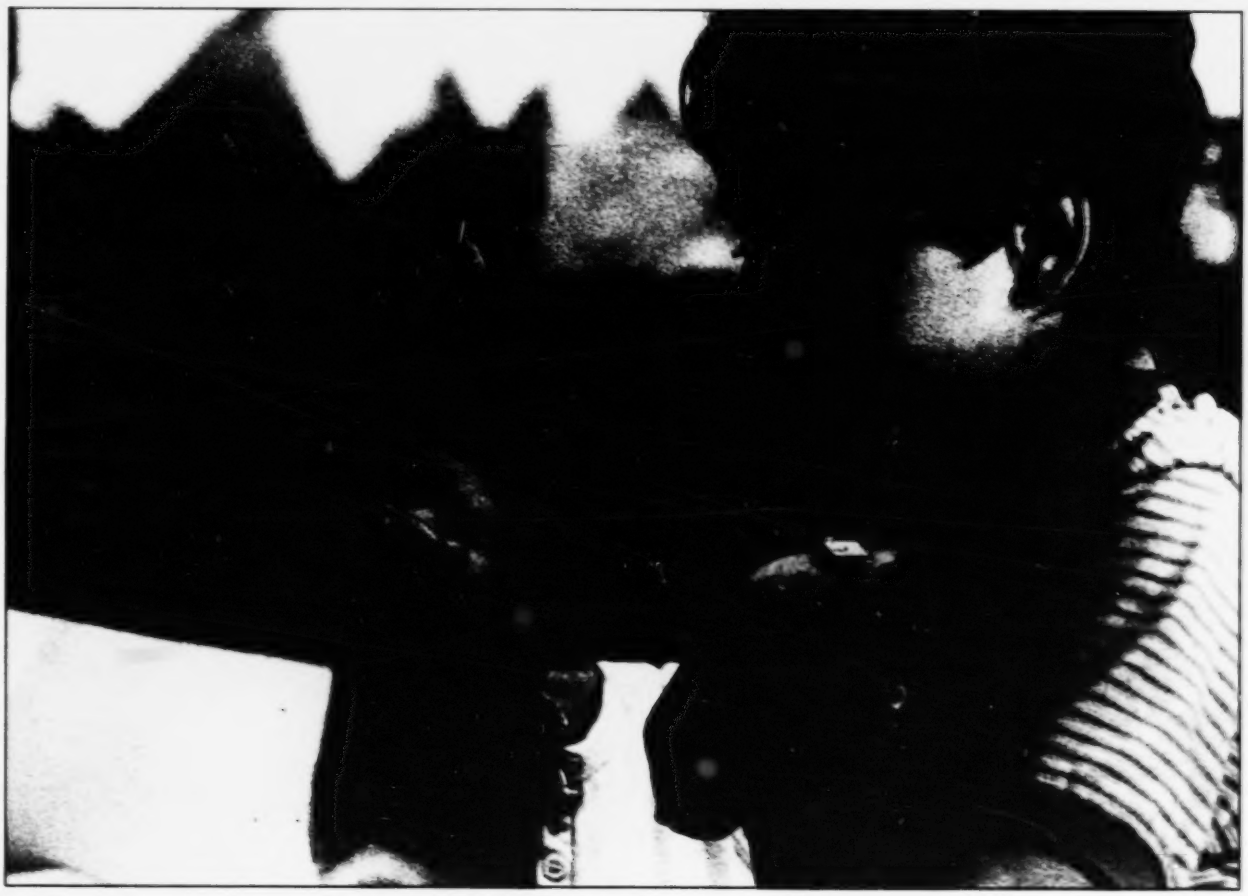
—Leslie Zackman, teacher mentor

and teacher mentors attend their own weekly training sessions. The teacher consultant in each school—a classroom teacher who works full-time in the program—works very closely with the part-time teacher mentors. Colletti talks proudly about the former teacher mentor at another school who is now a regional teacher trainer for the Board of Education. "It's a great new job!" she exclaims.

Colletti is equally proud of another teacher at PS 321 who was initially very hesitant to lead a workshop. "She is such a good teacher, such a professional," says Colletti. "She was really an unofficial teacher mentor." After Colletti helped her develop presentation skills and build up her confidence, that teacher is now the instructor of an after-school course.

Another teacher, new to the school, expressed interest in learning to conduct "Magic Circles" (group meetings) with her class. After individual training with Colletti, she led a lunchtime workshop on "Magic Circles" for her colleagues in the school. "She has become the resident expert," says Colletti with a smile. "The teachers ask *her* for help, not me."

The new skills learned by teachers are mirrored by new skills in their students. After taking a course in cooperative learning strategies at the Center, for example, one teacher—who, by her own admission, felt burned out—decided to try these strategies in her third grade classroom. She began slowly, with spelling and handwriting, then gradually expanded to social studies, revitalizing herself professionally in the process. With the formation of study/research groups, her students became peer teachers. When asked about their groups, these third graders speak proudly of group members who improved their test scores and show off group projects with noisy eagerness. The cooperative learning in this third grade classroom is a result (and a symbol) of the sharing among teachers throughout the school—proof that better teaching leads to better learning. ■



Helen Pearlstein and student

AVIATION HIGH SCHOOL

Queens

Substitute Vocational Assistant Program

Lori Johnson is an energetic, bright young teacher. Although she has been teaching for only a few months, her confidence in the classroom makes her seem like a veteran. Johnson's students—all boys—clearly like and respect her, and she is the only female shop teacher they have at Aviation High School. Johnson is following her own tradition of being first: She was the first female graduate of Aviation ("In my freshman year, it was 2,700 guys and me!"), the first female aircraft mechanic in New York City, and now the first female teacher of aircraft mechanics at Aviation High School.

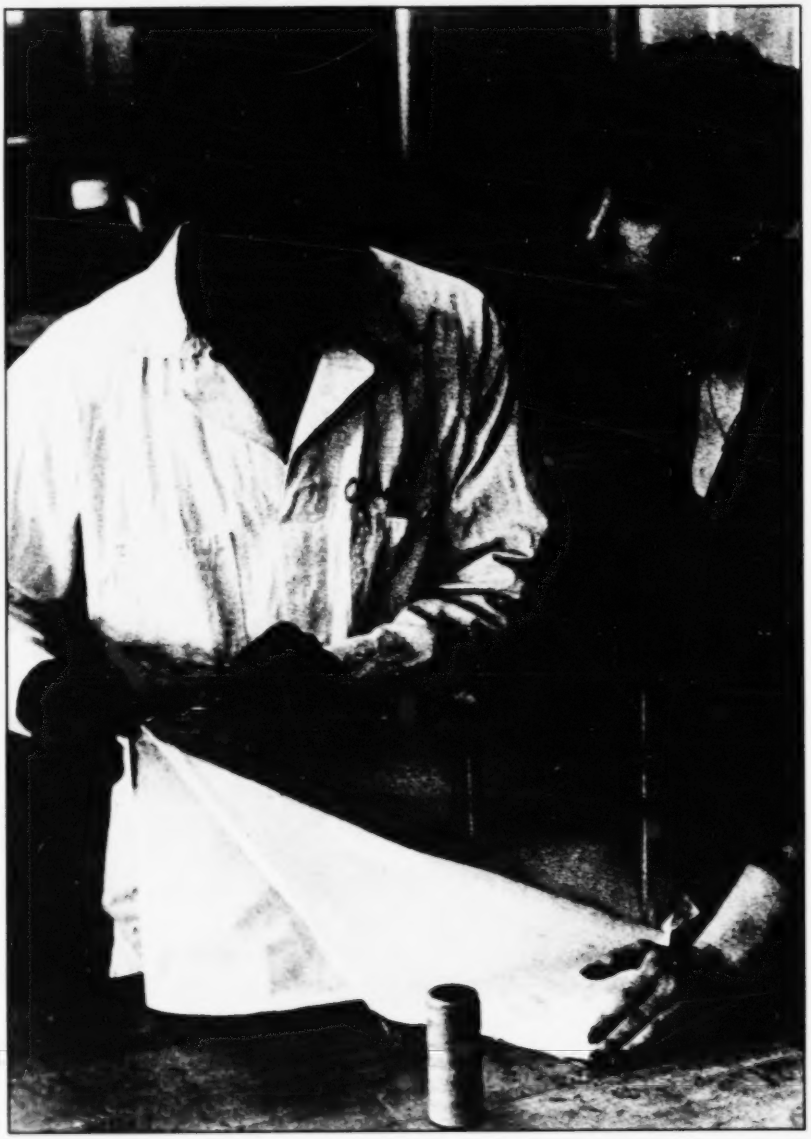
"I think this is the only way to train teachers. The problem we have is that new teachers have only been students. They should be assigned to mentors for six months as part of the college curriculum. It takes time, but Lori helped me, too."

—Tony Lipari, teacher and mentor

Lori (short for Lorraine) Johnson is also the first graduate of a unique teacher recruitment and training program: ***The Substitute Vocational Assistant (SVA) Program***. "After I graduated from high school, I worked for Pan Am," she says. "I came back because of the SVA Program. I always wanted to teach."

The SVA Program began in the fall of 1984 in response to an acute shortage of vocational high school teachers. "This is a most critical problem," says Ed Espaillat, UFT vice president for vocational high schools and one of the program's originators. "The system is simply unable to provide trained teachers in the trades. Let me give you an example: An electrician at the Board of Education begins at a salary of $32,000, with good benefits and working conditions. A teacher of electrical installation—who is teaching future electricians and who must have at least 64 college credits in addition to five years of experience in the trade—begins in 1986 at a salary of $20,000 with poor working conditions. You choose which job you would rather have."

The five-year SVA Program combines apprenticeship with academic training. It recruits vocational high school graduates who have been identified as outstanding by their teachers. Accepted applicants become substitute vocational assistants, or SVAs, and go to work for the Board of Education for 90% of the beginning teacher salary. Their training has three components. At night, they attend college at the program's expense. Each is assigned to a school as an assistant teacher, where he or she works with a teacher mentor for half of each year. During the other half of each year, they are



"If it wasn't for the SVA Program, I wouldn't be here. And I love my job!"

—Lori Johnson, teacher and former substitute vocational assistant

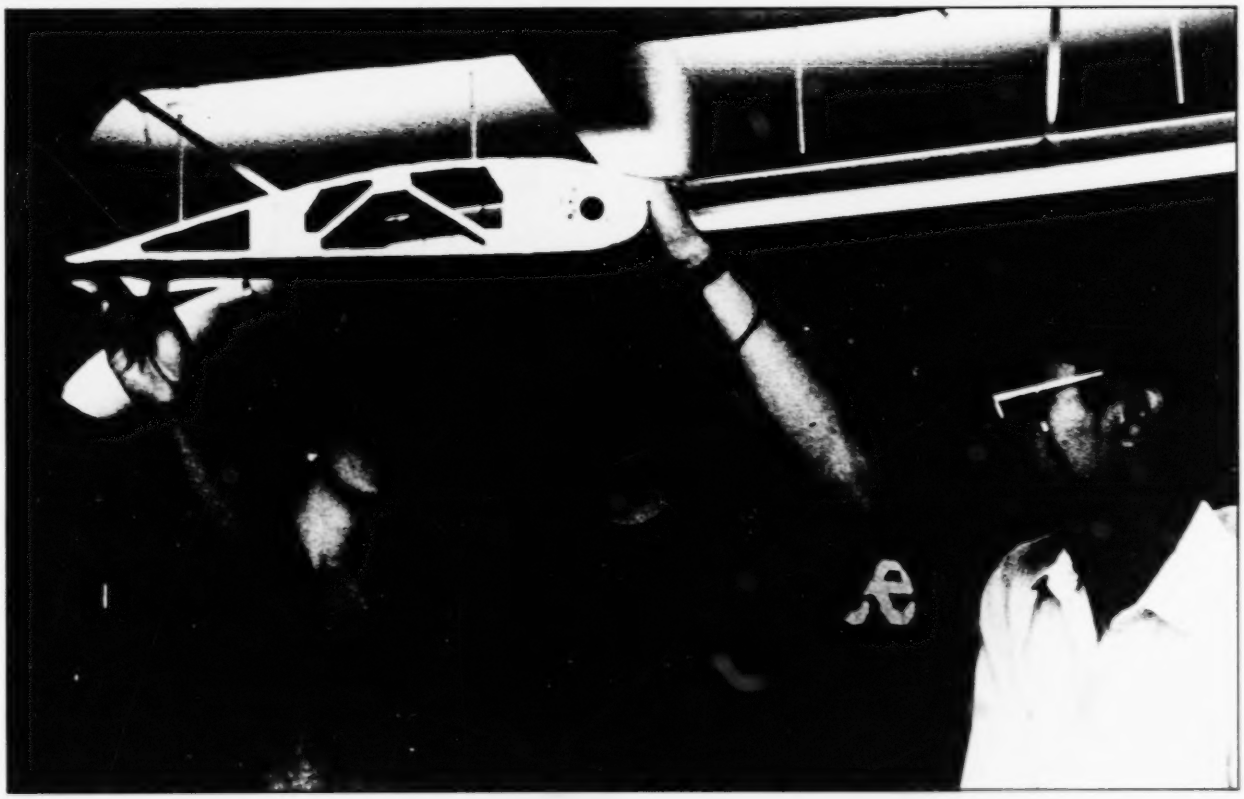
placed in industry for their required trade experience. All aspects of their training are overseen by a committee that includes teachers, Board of Education administrators, and UFT representatives. At the end of five years, the SVAs are ready to go to work as full-fledged vocational high school teachers. (Johnson was ready after only a year and a half because she entered the program with a number of college credits and several years of working experience.)

At the heart of the program is the relationship between the SVAs and their mentors. "The key is putting the right people in charge as mentors," says Tony Lipari, who was Johnson's mentor. Lipari is a relaxed veteran of both the school system and the Air National Guard, where he was a technician for many years before becoming a teacher. His shop is startling to first-time visitors; built like a hangar, it is filled with aircraft, some on the ground and some suspended from the ceiling. Students swarm over the planes, most of which are at least partially disassembled. "I was volunteered as a mentor," he laughs. "I didn't know what to expect, so I decided to treat Lori as I wanted to be treated. I kept a running log, wrote down what she did each day to show her progress. And we sat down every day, in any kind of free period we had, to talk about it.

"The mentor really sets the tone and the example," Lipari muses. "The SVA will imitate him, will teach the same way. So it's important to look for someone with the appropriate image and appearance. And his reputation with students is important, too. He should have an even temperament, be understanding, have lots of common sense, and be someone who doesn't go strictly by the rules. He needs to be flexible."

John Donahue, the mentor for Rita Adorno, another Aviation SVA, agrees: "Rita develops her own style. She follows my lead, but does it her way."

"Not everyone can be a good mentor," says Johnson. "The mentor has to be secure enough to give up authority. Tony gave me his authority. He trusted me and he was always right there behind me. He was willing to share everything he knows." Is Lipari a good teacher? "Absolutely!" Johnson says. "He is the smartest electrician I've ever seen, and he's a good teacher because of the way he handles students. He knows when to be



"Tony is my mentor. He will always be my mentor. When I have a question, I go straight to Tony because I respect him so much."
—Lori Johnson, teacher and former SVA

strict and when to look the other way. The human side is the best thing about him as a teacher."

In its first year the program included 28 SVAs throughout the school system. That number grew to 63 during the second year, and is expected to reach a total of 100 in 1986-87. The SVAs comprise mostly students who do not traditionally enter many of the vocational fields: minority and bilingual students as well as female aircraft and auto mechanics and male secretaries and cosmetologists. That is clearly a side benefit to a school system whose vocational high schools have been found "out of compliance" by the state in the areas of sex equity, staff integration, and opportunities for students with limited proficiency in English.

The program's popularity with students is also growing. "Students now know about the SVA program," says Johnson. "A girl who's now a junior has been saying since her sophomore year that she wants to be an SVA."

The primary benefit, however, remains the quality of preparation and training received by a new generation of teachers.

"Tony is my mentor," Johnson says. "He will always be my mentor. Whenever I have a question, I go straight to Tony because I respect him so much." ■

THE MOTT HALL SCHOOL
Mathematics, Science and Technology for Gifted and Talented Students

PS/IS 223
Community School District 6
Manhattan

A group of teachers sits around the conference table in their principal's crowded, cramped office, talking excitedly about what they do. The pleasure and pride they take in their work at ***The Mott Hall School*** is palpable. What they say about their own and each other's work, the creativity evidenced in the many special curriculum projects they describe, the very atmosphere that crackles with energy and pride in accomplishment—all of these testify that this educational experiment in upper Manhattan has created a place where teachers like to work.

The experiment at Mott Hall, which opened in February, 1985, mixes 450 fourth through eighth graders from throughout the school district who meet strict entrance requirements; seven subject area teacher/coordinators and 23 teachers selected for demonstrated excellence in teaching; one guidance counselor; a broad-based community advisory board;

and an explicit educational philosophy of excellence and collegiality.

"There is a lot of interaction going on here," says Dalma Garcia, the bilingual teacher/coordinator and now UFT chapter leader. "The school has a goal. We are working toward a common goal." Donna Derasmo, a fourth grade teacher, agrees: "Here we don't work in isolation. We work with others." Adds Spanish teacher Juanita Fernandez: "Here you can turn to others for help. There [in her previous school], I didn't want anyone to know what I was doing."

"I had an idea: to teach Spanish through science. I was encouraged—to try and fail, maybe, but at least to try."
—Juanita Fernandez, Spanish teacher

Teachers at Mott Hall create their own curricula. According to Marietta Benedetto, the elementary science teacher/coordinator: "Here we have the ultimate authority over what we teach and how." The teachers work together to develop goals, objectives, and a broad outline of topics based upon New York City's required curricula. Several principles guide this process: using themes to integrate different subject areas; emphasizing learning through discovery; and focusing on mathematics, science, and technology. "Some subjects are easier to integrate than others, such as science and math," says Derasmo. "But we try to integrate communication arts by choosing readings related to the math and science topics. It's very motivating and exciting, for us *and* our students."

Teachers then plan specific activities, both alone and with colleagues. To facilitate this, each teacher has one "curriculum period" every day in addition to regular "prep" periods (used to prepare for classes). During this period, they meet with colleagues, plan activities, discuss students who are having difficulties, research curriculum ideas, and so forth. At least once a week, colleagues from the same grade or subject area meet with each subject area teacher/coordinator to evaluate the week's activities and to set their plans for the following week. "We feed off each other's energies," says Garcia. "We talk for hours, even at home on the telephone, about curriculum. Before I came here, I never had a conversation with a colleague about curriculum."

"We're trying to get the kids to succeed, not fail," says Benedetto. "If they fail, we're not succeeding in our jobs." Derasmo describes a collaboratively developed unit that she used in her fourth grade classroom: "We studied toys and how they work, and used graphs to show various times and distances the toys could move. Learning the skill of graphing was not artificially isolated; it was a natural outgrowth of our work. Now my kids can set up any kind of graph."

To evaluate the quality of teaching and to hone teaching skills, Mott Hall uses peer evaluation. Except for new teachers (who must, by law, be evaluated by supervisors) and those few who are uncomfortable with this process, the teachers observe each other at work. A fellow teacher (usually a teacher/coordinator) visits the classroom after discussing the lesson and watches or, more often, participates. Afterward, the two colleagues meet to analyze what happened and to write a short assessment. Says Derasmo: "It's not threatening. The coordinators here are top notch experts in their fields. And when they visit my classroom, they *work*!"

"Here we have the ultimate authority over what we teach and how."
—Marietta Benedetto, elementary science teacher/coordinator

What are the results of Mott Hall's focus on teacher excellence and collaboration? A 94% student attendance rate and 99% staff attendance speak for themselves in a city where middle school attendance is notoriously low. In addition, the first graduating class of 21 students, in June, 1986,

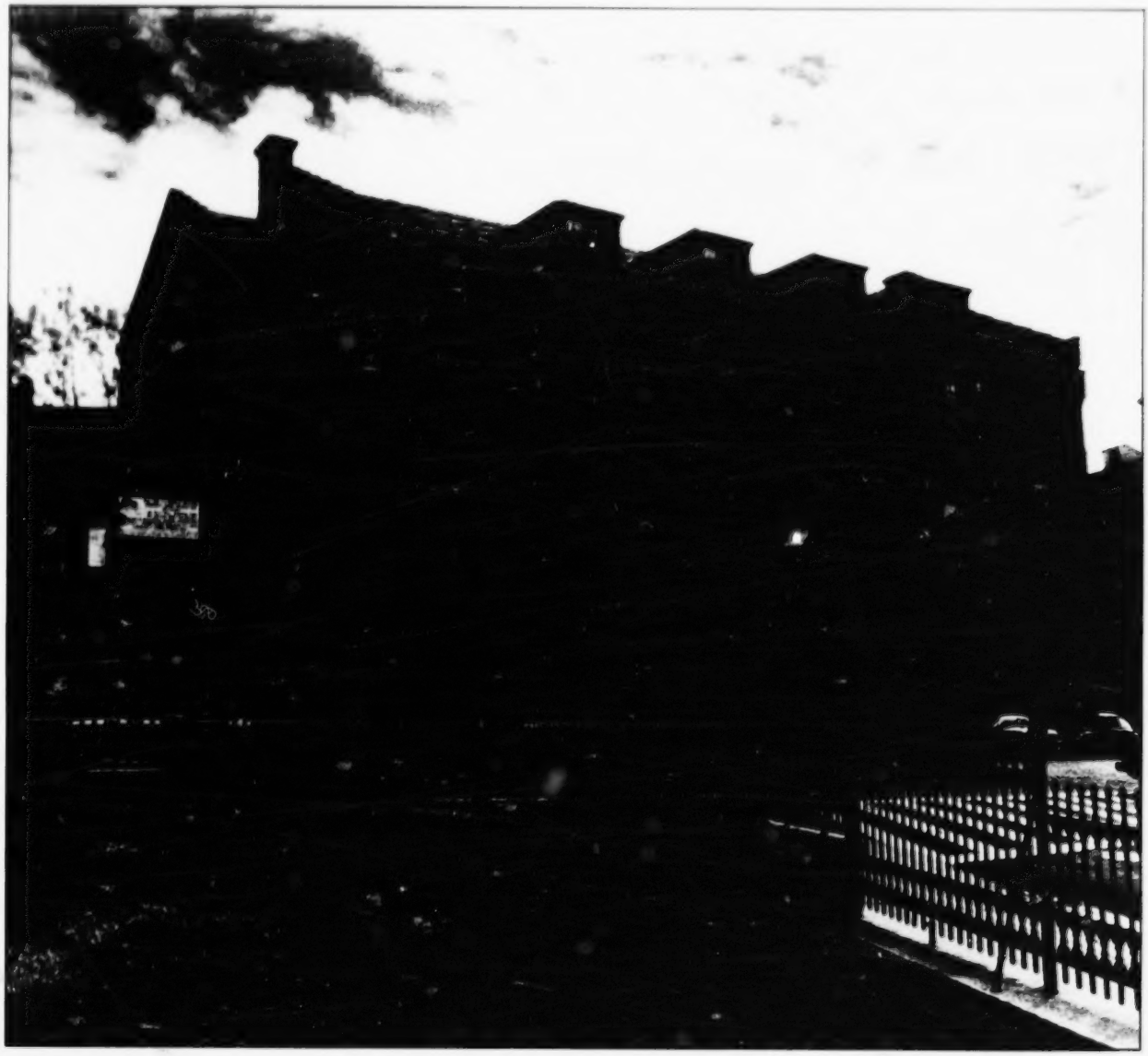
Donna DeErasmo and students

included 13 students accepted at competitive specialized high schools: six at the Bronx High School of Science; six at Brooklyn Technical High School; and one at Stuyvesant High School. "These students are not really gifted," says Judy O'Donoghue, the social studies teacher/coordinator. "They are above average and we nurtured them. We treated them with respect."

Another tangible result is the multitude of special projects and activities available to Mott Hall students. All were discovered or created by teachers, who are encouraged to find resources outside the school to enhance their curricula. "Whatever you suggest that is educationally viable will be supported," says Roberta Lawson, the communication arts teacher/coordinator. Classes visit the *Intrepid* Air and Space Museum every Monday, for example, for four-week units on various science topics; Mott Hall teachers and the museum's education staff develop these units together. Some seventh graders participate in an after-school science enrichment program at City College developed with NASA. Other students attend a Saturday science enrichment program for gifted students at Fordham University. Some classes are part of the Lincoln Center Institute, an aesthetic arts program, while others take part in an American history program that involves performances at Symphony Space followed by classroom workshops. A science writer and a scriptwriter have visited the school, courtesy of a guest authors and writers program. High school students from A. Philip Randolph College High School serve as mentors to Mott Hall students. An exchange program allows Mott Hall students to visit the Bronx High School of Science for six

weeks. Jacques D'Amboise's National Dance Institute includes a number of students from Mott Hall.

Are there problems at Mott Hall? Of course. Its location in a leased building on the City College campus is far from ideal. Crumbling plaster and the Board of Education's refusal to build permanent science labs in leased space are but two of the more obvious difficulties. In addition, a truly collegial relationship has yet to develop with City College faculty. Some teachers, more traditional in their approach, have difficulty with the school's philosophy. As part of a predominantly poor and Hispanic school district desperate for classroom space, there is constant pressure for the school to grow. Five inexperienced teachers had to be hired when it did expand in September, 1985, creating the need for unanticipated training and support. (With typical, pragmatic creativity the staff created a "buddy" system, in which each of the new teachers has an experienced teacher as mentor.) The curricula developed by teachers have undergone constant revision and adaptation, involving hours of work for the teachers involved. But, despite these and other difficulties, says Derasmo, "Being here is like dying and going to heaven." ■



The Mott Hall School

HIGH SCHOOL OF TELECOMMUNICATION ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

Brooklyn

The former Bay Ridge High School building is stately and graceful, set off by quiet, tree-lined streets of one- and two-family homes. Newly restored panels of stained glass in the lobby show women in various career roles, from scientist to teacher to homemaker, elegant reminders that this was once a high school for girls. Inside the school, the technology of the present takes over. Computer graphics printouts, a showcase honoring the astronauts who died in the Challenger explosion, and an electronic message display greet visitors as they sign in. On the second floor, five computer rooms and a radio studio form the nucleus of the Christa McAuliffe Technology Center; a three-room video studio is planned.

The mix of past and present is a graceful one, and it is reflected in both the name and philosophy of this "redesigned" school: the ***High School of Telecommunication Arts and Technology***. "Our philosophy is to use all this technology to learn fundamental skills, including critical thinking," says principal Gloria Rakovic. "We infuse technology into all areas of the curriculum here." A look at the school's four-year course offerings—entirely developed by teachers—shows no courses in "computer literacy" or programming. Instead, one finds broadcast journalism and film production in the English department, computer mathematics in the math department, medical technology in the science department, and so forth.

"The philosophy was that we shouldn't take the mandated curriculum from the Board of Education," says Larry Abrams, an assistant principal and social

studies teacher, who has worked closely with the school's 21 teachers in curriculum development. "What we had to do was meet the Board of Ed requirements and the requirements of the state's new Regents Action Plan while keeping true to the themes of the school."

To create this kind of program, the teachers met during the summer of 1985, before the school opened in September, for planning, team building, and curriculum development. They worked in committees to develop curriculum guides, then evaluated guides done by different committees and revised their own to incorporate other groups' suggestions. "The mandate was to create something that could really be used as a teaching tool," Abrams points out. "This was a first experience for some teachers. It forced them to think about the total process of teaching and learning—what they want kids to learn and how to do it."

How do teachers feel about this process? On a warm morning in mid-June, about 15 teachers and paraprofessionals reflect on the school's first year. "I'm very glad I came here," says Mark Karwowski, a teacher in the remedial reading lab. Barbara Vitting, a math teacher and the UFT chapter leader, says, "Here you can get what you need. Those pressures are gone. You can do what you have to do." Janet Herlitz, the science teacher/coordinator, adds: "It's very exciting being in on the ground floor. Your input will have influence."

"There are teachers, security guards, paraprofessionals here who will take it on themselves to do whatever needs to be done," adds assistant principal Jinx Cozzi-Perullo. "And all of them have input into this tissue we're trying to create into a school."

"You have more responsibility as a teacher here than anywhere else," agrees Eileen Riese, the special education computer teacher/coordinator.

The teachers also talk about their staff development program, which comprises a series of after-school workshops offered by teachers (or in one case, by a paraprofessional) for their colleagues: "teachers teaching teachers," they call it. Topics of these workshops were chosen by the teachers themselves. At the beginning of each semester, they answered two questions: What skills do you have that you would like to share with colleagues? and What skills do you want or need to learn?

Teachers teaching teachers

"With teachers leading the workshops, I was a lot more comfortable," states librarian Carolyn Weiss. "I trust them. It has been tried and tested, it works, it's being done. There's no fear and no pressure. It's a peer making good suggestions."

"The workshops are enjoyable

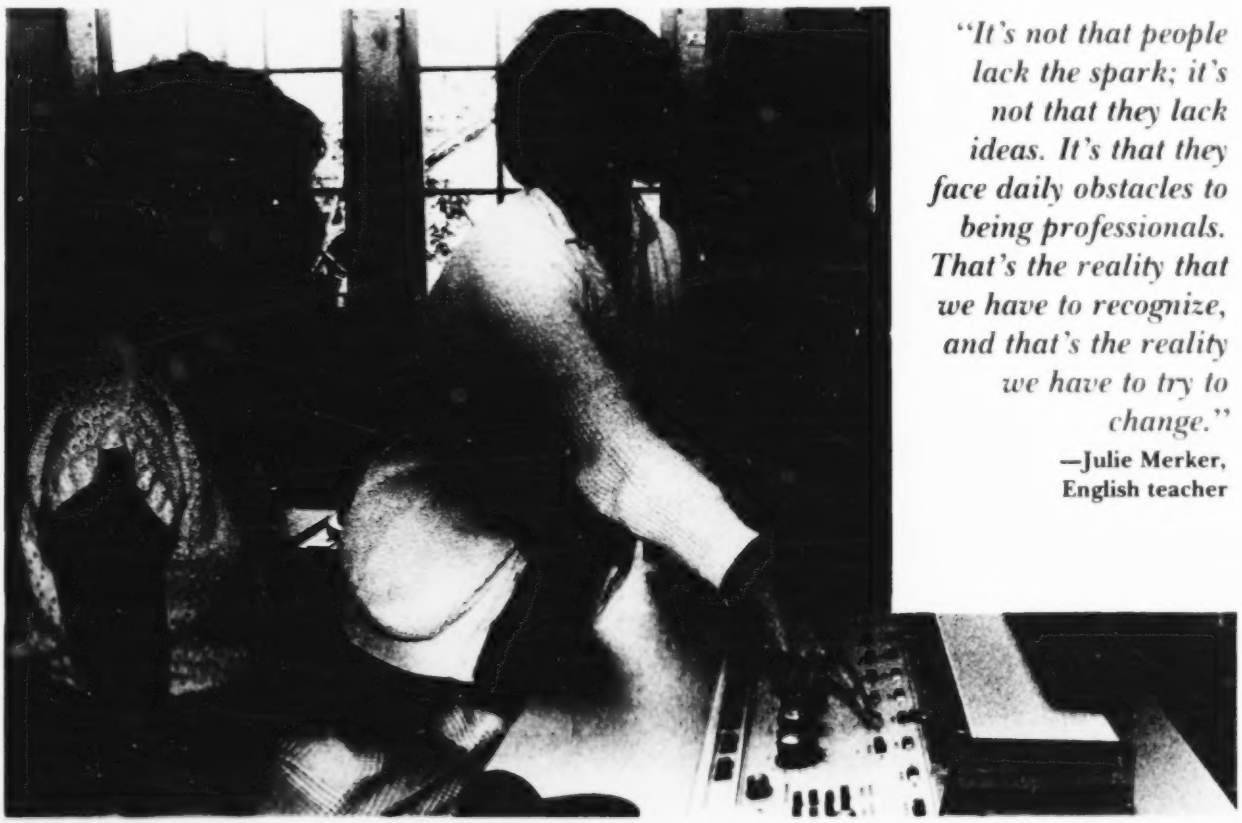
and practical," adds Julie Merker, an English teacher and the leader of several popular workshops. "A teacher tells you: This is what I do with this. Also, the workshops are given on different levels because we know each other's competencies. You know a workshop will be on the right level for you."

"Whatever project you think of, they [the school administrators] say: Yes," says Bob Graham, a teacher and the technology center coordinator. "They give you the opportunity to fail, as long as you do the job and are responsible for it." Has anything failed? "Yes," answers Graham. "We designed a technology course that was too ambitious. The kids weren't ready for it. So we had to redesign it." Adds Merker: "We talked about doing interdisciplinary curriculum development, but we never really got around to doing it."

But, clearly, much more has succeeded than failed, these teachers feel. Every month, they meet in "quality circles" to review and, if necessary, revise their curriculum guides. "If something isn't working, everyone in the department—in the building!—knows about it," says Abrams. "The norm here is to create better lessons." As an example, he brings out copies of the magazines on Japan that students produced on computers as part of a social studies independent study unit.

Ed Seto, a guidance counselor and assistant principal, points with pride to the weekly "advisor period" developed collaboratively by teachers and guidance staff. "It's a living curriculum," he says. "About 20 students meet with a teacher once a week to talk about what's happening in the school. We do this instead of official class so that we all have a chance to react to and anticipate problems."

Two years of planning went into creating the High School of Telecommunication Arts and Technology before these teachers became involved. A redesign task force of community leaders, local politicians, teachers' union representatives, and Board of Education specialists participated actively in the planning, as did a technical advisory board with representatives from major corporations, the major television networks, and local colleges and universities. Principal Rakovic headed the effort to plan a new high school while phasing out the old. "Our task force was real



"It's not that people lack the spark; it's not that they lack ideas. It's that they face daily obstacles to being professionals. That's the reality that we have to recognize, and that's the reality we have to try to change."

—Julie Merker, English teacher

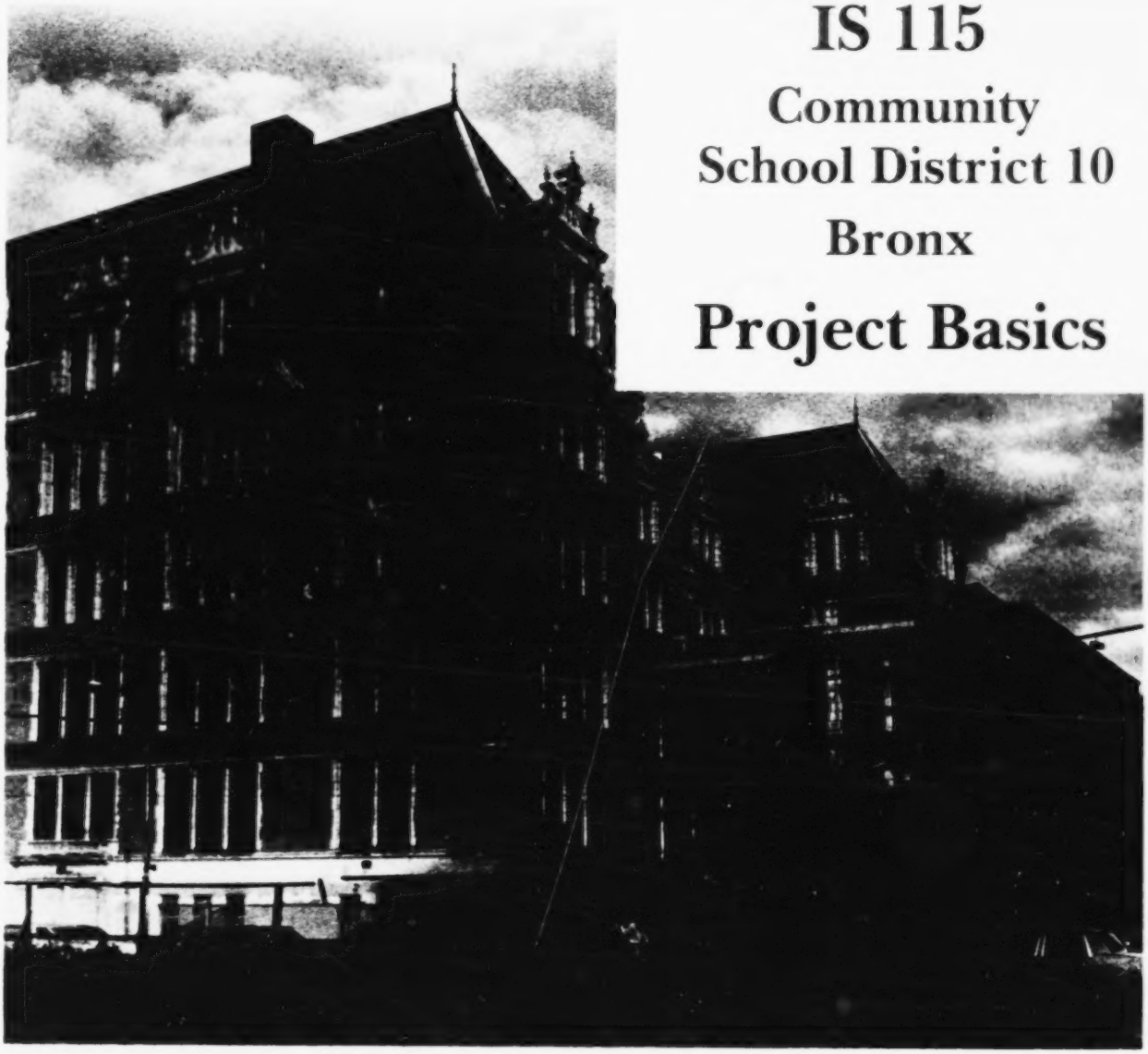
"There's not a person on this staff who doesn't care about kids. They really want to take control of their lives, be professional."

—Larry Abrams, assistant principal and social studies teacher

and alive," she recalls. "It met about 40 times over the two years. The members were very passionately involved in creating this school."

In September, 1985, 285 ninth graders from all over Brooklyn entered the school, selected from among nearly 2,000 applicants. They were half male, half female, and about 55% minority. Since it is one of New York City's "educational option" schools, a prescribed percentage (then 25%) of the students read below grade level. In 1986, 225 new ninth graders and an additional 50 tenth graders entered the school. The goal is to keep the total population below 900. Things will change as the number of students and staff grows, but, as assistant principal Cozzi-Perrullo puts it, "We have the sense now that the school is going where it should be going." ■

IS 115
Community School District 10
Bronx
Project Basics



From a distance, IS 115 looks like a small cathedral rising above the littered city streets of the west central Bronx. Once, this was the campus of Bronx Community College. A legacy of those days is a room several times larger than the average New York City public school classroom. This is where Phyllis Shulman team-teaches an alternative education class for students repeating the seventh grade—in New York City parlance, a "Gates class" (since the students couldn't pass through the "gate" to the eighth grade). Late afternoon sunlight streams through two walls of windows, accentuating the comfortable messiness of the classroom, which looks well-used at the end of another school day.

Shulman is also a member of the leadership team established in the winter of 1986 at IS 115 as part of ***Project Basics***, which is run by the Center for Educational Leadership (CEL) of the New York Urban Coalition. When the New York State Education Department released its Comprehensive Assessment Report in November, 1985, this school was one of hundreds of New York City public schools cited as below standard. Like the others, IS 115 was required to develop a three-year school improvement plan. The school's staff chose to do this with the help of Project Basics.

CEL's philosophy is that school improvement is based on leadership training and staff development for a school's existing staff, along with "a willingness on the

part of administrators to work with teachers and allow teachers to participate in the planning process," according to Askia Davis, CEL director.

IS 115 chose Project Basics because "it fit with what the teachers and I thought the school needed," says Marvin Halpern, the principal at the time of this study, who has since retired.

When a call went out for volunteers to develop the plan, nine teachers (with diverse specialties), a guidance counselor, the principal, an assistant principal (who has since become principal), and a CEL staff development specialist joined together to make up the leadership team.

Not everyone at IS 115 welcomed Project Basics the way Shulman did. Some were skeptical—they've seen too many school improvement projects come and go; others were more hostile, resenting "outsiders" advising them.

"The problem with the process," Shulman points out, "is that old Catch-22. Someone asks what you want for your birthday, and you don't know what you have to choose from, what's out there. When Project Basics first came here, we had to learn what was available to us, what they could offer."

"There was resistance," says Augusta Mann, the school's CEL staff development specialist, "but it wasn't extreme. The teachers at IS 115 are very friendly and open and will listen. They're *not* negative."

Shulman says that teachers on the leadership team have found the CEL consultants "top notch, knowledgeable, efficient, and good leaders." Mann, in turn, calls IS 115's leadership team "one of the most enthusiastic. The whole team is all very excited about working for change. They all participate very fully." Marvin Saver, chapter leader, agrees: "I am very impressed by the commitment of all members of the team."

"Let's face it. In our system, there are people who give out material and collect material, give out material and collect material.... Let's face it. If you're going to teach, you have to perspire."

—Phyllis Shulman, seventh grade Gates teacher and member of the leadership team

Using the expertise of CEL consultants as well as the staff development specialist assigned to the school, the leadership team decided to focus on improving reading instruction for the school's 800 students, part of one of the most crowded school districts in the city. The team developed a plan for sixth graders during 1985-86; a plan for seventh and eighth graders will follow in 1986-87. It also did everything possible to involve colleagues in the process and to keep them informed. "We started a newsletter for precisely that purpose," says Shulman, who has taught here since 1971 except for a four-year motherhood break.

To the skeptics, she asks, "Can't you be open to somebody who comes in to share good ideas for a good purpose? We have a chance for real input here. Let's take advantage of it!"

Members of the leadership team did just that: took advantage of the training offered by CEL to gain skills in decision-making and leadership as well as in how to set up a better reading program. They were released from class in order to meet weekly for a double period and participated in a two-day training retreat in January, 1986. They consulted with district reading specialists and with the school's reading teachers before selecting new reading programs. Workshops and other staff development activities on the new sixth grade program took place in spring, 1986, to help prepare teachers for using the new program in the fall. Teachers also helped to write a set of standards and goals for improving sixth

Phyllis Shulman and colleagues from the leadership team

grade reading achievement.

During 1986-87, the project's second year, members of the leadership team have become coaches for their colleagues. Working with teachers who volunteer to participate, these teacher leaders demonstrate their new skills in the classroom, then visit their colleagues' classrooms to help them develop the same skills. "We stress practical instructional strategies which the teachers find useful," says Mann. "This helps to convince more and more teachers to participate."

"The feeling teachers and other school staff have about what they're doing makes my job easier," says Davis. "They believe it's *theirs*, not ours. In this way, our CEL staff of 15 really becomes a staff of 150. The school staff is an extension of what we are."

Says Shulman, "We want to help the kids become better readers, but also to strike a balance between continuity in the reading program and professional independence for teachers." ■

"This is about teacher empowerment, which happens when teachers feel they are professionals and effective and are recognized for their effectiveness."

—Askia Davis, Director, Center for Educational Leadership

INGREDIENTS

If there are conditions which create and nurture teacher professionalism, then Middle College High School, which serves troubled youngsters, must not be so very different from the Mott Hall School, which serves gifted and talented students. The SVA Program and SESP must share common elements beyond their use of practicing classroom teachers as mentors. Manhattan Center, where Harvey Kaye created the pioneering Industrial Arts/Technology Education Program, must be a lot like PS 87, where Anna Switzer and Paul Schwarz dreamed up the innovative Mentor Teacher Intern Program.

It is the premise of this booklet that there are definable ingredients shared by the case studies—conditions whose presence enables teachers to take professional leadership roles in these and other settings. This analysis should not be interpreted as a recipe, however, for each school and program mixes these ingredients and adds to them in its own way. Rather, this is a guide, an attempt to indicate the necessary conditions of teacher professionalism in actual New York City public school settings.

The individual

The teachers and administrators visited here are clearly outstanding, each and every one. They are recognized by their peers as exceptionally good at what they do. They are willing to "go the extra mile," put in long, hard hours to do whatever needs to be done. Think about Harvey Kaye and how he created the shops and labs he needed at Manhattan Center. These individuals are articulate and perceptive, revealing that they think carefully about what they do. They are creative. Consider Barry Smith's economics course at Middle College High School. These teachers are also assertive and courageous, willing to use the system or even to "buck the system" to accomplish their goals. Think about Anna Switzer and Paul Schwarz and how they convinced their local school board to support the Mentor Teacher Intern Program with an almost unheard-of unanimous vote.

> ***"The most exciting thing for me has to do with professional self-actualization, with having people listen to me as a teacher and say: That's a good idea. You go do it."***
>
> **—Paul Schwarz, first grade teacher, PS 87**

Can teacher professionalism exist without this kind of leadership? Probably not, one would say after visiting these nine sites. Without a Tony Lipari to serve as mentor or a Fran Colletti as teacher consultant, for example, the schools and programs singled out would have much less to make them noteworthy.

But this doesn't mean that professionalism is limited to these few individuals. They all describe a time when they were isolated behind the closed doors of their classrooms—as many others still are—dreaming of a chance to do more for their students and themselves. As Rosemarie Rizzo-Tolk, an English teacher at West Side High School, puts it, "Recognizing the need, understanding the problem, and having a vision about how to solve the problem—these belong to the individual person, and that's a core of teacher professionalism, that there's a spark inside the person."

The setting

"The spark is there, it's not dead, but it has to be provided with the right setting," adds David Sherman, assistant to the UFT president. "If the setting is not right, the play won't unfold and develop."

Carol Duke, the SESP teacher consultant at PS 97 and a member of the District 1 Committee of Concerned Educators, agrees: "Self-esteem is important, and the ability to be self-directed. But there must be enabling mechanisms to accomplish things so that one isn't overburdened just trying to make things happen."

Any discussion of teacher professionalism must look at the school as a workplace. And it is—for teachers, administrators, teacher aides, security guards, custodians, secretaries, and many others. It is also, however, a place of learning for students. Unlike a factory, on which a school is modeled in many ways, the ultimate product is not easily evaluated. A well-educated youngster is not like an automobile, despite the fact that test scores are often treated like gas mileage ratings or repair records. On the other hand, factory and office managers have long recognized the fact that satisfied and happy workers turn out higher quality products. School systems, it seems, rarely apply this lesson to teachers, their front-line workers. Bernard Mecklowitz, superintendent of Community School District 1, is all too unusual when he says, "We want to hear from teachers. We *do* place value on the people working for us."

But there is more to teacher professionalism than making teachers satisfied and happy, important as that is. A school is *not* a factory or an office. It is a place where children learn, where future workers and leaders are prepared for adulthood. And it is a place where children who might become our future teachers see what it is like to be a teacher. In the settings examined here, there are common characteristics that teachers identify as critical to their professionalism.

Size, for example, is among the most evident, and it is cited over and over by teachers as related to their effectiveness. Manhattan Center with 1,100 students, the High School of Telecommunication Arts and Technology with a projected cap of 900, and Middle College High School with 450 students are all significantly smaller than the average New York City comprehensive high school, which often has a student population of 3,000.

"We have a small staff and we're always talking to each other," says Linda Scheer, a foreign language teacher at Telecommunication Arts. "The kids know that. And they know we're talking about them."

The SVA Program began small, with 28 assistant teachers and, over three years, reached its maximum of 100. The Mentor Teacher Intern Program at PS 87 began with only two mentor teachers and eight interns. The Mott Hall School, with 300 students its first year and 450 its second, is smaller than the typical intermediate school. "Kids are happy here," says Judy O'Donoghue, the social studies teacher/coordinator at Mott Hall. "Everyone knows everyone because the school is small. Also, the kids are treated with respect."

Carol Duke, Julie Merker, Larry Abrams, and Paul Schwarz

Teacher schedules are flexible in most of these settings, too. Teachers are released from their classrooms so that they can participate in professional activities—and *these activities are considered legitimate, even important, parts of their jobs.* At Mott Hall, all teachers have a daily "curriculum period" during which they write, evaluate, or discuss curricula. Members of the District 1 Committee of Concerned Educators are freed one afternoon a month for meetings. The Project Basics leadership team at IS 115 works together one double period each week. Both mentor teachers and interns at PS 87 have their classes covered on a regular basis. And the part-time teacher mentors in SESP have one period a day to

work with other teachers.

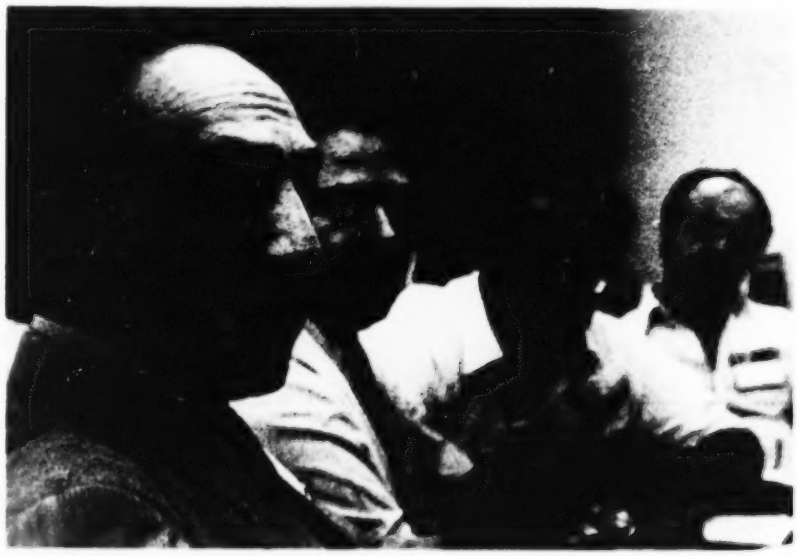
Duke expresses other teachers' feelings that none of these scheduling arrangements is ideal: "When I became a part-timer with SESP, the time factor was a problem. I was a teacher with my own class, and I had one period a day to help my colleagues in a Staff Resource Center. I had a lot of conflicts, as a concerned teacher, about not being with my class. So I ended up giving up my prep period, my lunch, and my center prep to do an effective job." But, little as this time may be, it is far better than the norm, where teachers rarely have even a common prep period during which to meet.

"Teacher professionalism, to succeed, means conditions which maximize the potential talents of teachers."

—Barry Smith, social studies teacher and UFT chapter leader, Middle College High School

for their classes. Says Barbara Vitting, a math teacher and the UFT chapter leader there: "Every teacher had input and we got what we really needed. It's based on seeing the kids you have and what their needs are." New reading programs were selected by the teachers at IS 115, instead of being dictated by school or district administrators. It may seem only logical to consult teachers in these processes, since, as Mecklowitz points out: "Teachers work with the supplies and the textbooks. They know what's effective." But, all too often, it doesn't happen.

Smith makes a related point: By talking to other teachers in professional settings, "we learned



Bernard Mecklowitz, David Sherman, Ronald Jones, and Ed Espaillat

Resource allocation is handled differently in many of these settings, too. Few of the programs have extra dollars in their budgets, with the important exception of citywide programs like SESP, Project Basics, and the SVA Program. But all have established procedures that allow teachers a say in how dollars are spent. At Telecommunication Arts, for example, teachers select the textbooks and instructional supplies that administrators encouraged us to go out and find resources not present in our own schools given budget constraints. Thus, we were not given just lip service, but the ability to go out into the community—a very important factor." Larry Abrams, an assistant principal and social studies teacher at Telecommunication Arts, points out, "If you want to encourage professionalism, you need a budget to back it up."

The climate

An intangible—but real—part of every school setting is its "climate": the way it feels to be part of that particular institution. Educational research usually focuses on how school climate affects students. The same factors that create a positive climate for students, one might suppose, also work to the benefit of teachers. In these settings, teachers isolated six factors as essential in creating a professional climate.

The first is the ***support of administrators.*** While individual styles vary greatly, the school administrators in these nine schools and programs, without exception, are actively supportive. "We have support and direction from the top," says Marietta Benedetto, the teacher/coordinator of elementary science at the Mott Hall School. Her words are echoed by Helen Pearlstein, the UFT chapter leader at PS 321, where SESP has a Staff Resource Center: "The principal here is very supportive." Bob Grant, the principal of Aviation High School, enthusiastically supports the SVA Program. "This is the greatest thing that ever happened," he says. According to Marsha Slater, an English teacher at the International High School, "Eric Nadelstern, our assistant principal, supports professionalism like no one had ever seen before."

Even more important than administrative support, however, is a ***belief in the value of teachers' contributions.*** At the Mott Hall School, this belief underlies the school's basic philosophy. "No one questions a doctor's prescription," says Juanita Fernandez, a Spanish teacher there. "One shouldn't question teachers' suggestions for what goes on in the school. At Mott Hall, teachers make the decisions, and we have a good program because of that."

Paul Schwarz

Cecilia Cullen, the principal of Middle College High School, stresses that individual responsibility must apply to students as well as teachers. "This is about empowerment, for kids *and* teachers," she says. Abe Ruda, the UFT district representative for District 1 at the time of this study and now Bronx borough representative, describes teachers' reaction to this: "Veteran teachers who questioned the value of educational reform are thrilled with what's happening in District 1. Someone is asking for their input. They're not just automatons anymore."

A third climatic element is a ***shared educational philosophy.*** "We have a common vision here," says Julie Merker, an English teacher at Telecommunication Arts. According to Ed Seto, a guidance counselor and assistant principal at that school, this vision was expressed by the school's advertisement for teachers: "High touch, high tech. I thought: This can't be true: creative flexibility! But it is." Switzer and Schwarz are clear about their philosophy, too. "We believe in the child-centered approach," states Switzer. "People need to understand who we are and what kind of classrooms we run. We are not trying to sell

this to everyone."

Despite Switzer's disclaimer, she and Schwarz *are* convinced that their approach is the right one. And their ***focus on the needs of students*** is another common element in these settings. Kaye's motivation for developing the Industrial Arts/Technology Education Program at Manhattan Center, for example, was not just his own need for professional excellence. More importantly, he foresaw his students' need for competence with modern technology. "I always put myself in the position of the student," he says. Phyllis Shulman at IS 115 is also motivated by her students' needs. "Project Basics," she says, "is good for the kids, good for the school."

"Teacher professionalism," emphasizes Donna Derasmo, a fourth grade teacher at the Mott Hall School, "means being the best teacher for the kids that you can be."

A ***sense of collegiality*** also exists in all these schools and programs. Fernandez says of the Mott Hall School, "Here you can turn to others for help. There [in her previous school], I didn't want anyone to know what I was doing." Bob Graham, the teacher/coordinator of the Technology Center at Telecommunication Arts, notes, "Because the school is small and the staff is good, we work as colleagues. We think about the process [of teaching] and what bases we have to touch." Janet Herlitz, the science teacher/coordinator there, agrees: "There's a lot of networking here, sharing ideas."

Finally, in these settings there is an ***openness to experimentation***. Teachers are able to take risks, even to fail. This is all too rare, points out SESP director Howard Gollub: "While it's our job as educators to encourage students to ask questions when they need to know something, a very different message is sent to teachers. If you need to know something, the safest thing to do is to hide that. Or, if you want to do something different, too often it must be put aside."

Not at the Mott Hall School, according to Fernandez: "I had an idea: to teach Spanish through science. I was encouraged—to try and fail, maybe, but at least to try." Graham says the same thing about his school: "Whatever project you think of, they say: Yes. They give you the opportunity to fail, as long as you do the job and are responsible for it."

Training and Development

"Professionalism and staff development go hand in hand," asserts Schwarz. "Staff development is a means of achieving professionalism. It has to be individualized—not putting a first-year teacher in with a 20-year teacher and expecting them to learn the same thing at the same session. What's so revolutionary

Barry Smith and student

about that? We've been talking about it in our classrooms for a hundred years."

Schwarz is describing the final ingredient essential to teacher professionalism: training teachers in the skills they need to be leaders and participate in decision-making. The Center for Educational Leadership's Project Basics was established to do this in the interests of school improvement in low-performing schools. SESP explicitly develops teacher leadership, too, helping classroom teachers become the school experts in particular areas. "Teachers here [in the SESP Staff Resource Center] are in charge of their own staff development," says Colletti.

The kind of staff development that goes on in these settings does not view teachers as passive recipients of training, however. Teachers are also trainers or potential trainers, experienced professionals with a wealth of skills and knowledge to share with fellow teachers. At Telecommunication Arts, for example, at the beginning of each semester teachers define the skills they have that they would like to share with colleagues and the skills that they would like to learn. From their responses, a series of after-school workshops is designed in which teachers teach teachers.

In Community School District 1, the Committee of Concerned Educators—composed mostly of teachers—asks the teachers in each school: What do *you* think you need or want to learn?

"We have to give teachers the authority to make decisions according to their abilities, and provide additional training for teachers as needed," says Fernandez. ■

Larry Abrams talking with Ed Espaillat and Bernard Mecklowitz

ISSUES

"If you talk about improving supplies, equipment, salary issues for teachers, you're talking about improving things for kids. But we have a larger problem here: our society doesn't value kids. We all know the value of smaller schools and toilets that flush and ceilings that don't fall down . . . ."

—Cole Genn, former principal, Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics

Although they are very special in many ways, the schools and programs described in this booklet are not without problems. Some have fewer than others; clearly, some have developed professionalism to a greater degree than others. But all struggle to overcome obstacles of various kinds, some unique to a particular setting and some shared. These obstacles raise a number of critical issues that must be part of any look at teacher professionalism.

Professionalism, Public Image, and Salary

"Many of us don't feel like professionals because we're not viewed as professionals by the public," says Carol Duke, SESP teacher consultant and a member of the District 1 Committee of Concerned Educators. Bernard Mecklowitz, the superintendent of Duke's district, argues, "In many respects, we have to do that for ourselves, and the public will have to come along. As we become professionals and take on more responsibility, that recognition will come." But, as Ronald Jones, the UFT district representative for District 15 at the time of this study, points out, "We measure professionals, sometimes, by the dollar."

It is impossible to discuss teacher professionalism without raising these issues. They will not be easily resolved, as Julie Merker, an English teacher at Telecommunication Arts, wryly observes: "It seems like a chicken vs. egg dilemma. We'll be treated as professionals when we act as professionals, and we'll act as professionals when we're treated as professionals."

Teaching as a profession is not well regarded by the public; polls of people selected at random and of teachers are unanimous on this point. Enrollments at schools of education have declined disastrously in recent years, and students who do choose teaching as a career have less academic ability than in the past. Other career options have opened up for women and minorities, the traditional teaching corps. In addition, recent surveys of practicing teachers have uncovered their dissatisfaction with the profession and their desire to leave it.

"When there is a spark, the educational system is designed to put out that spark in five years," maintains Larry Abrams, an assistant principal and social studies teacher at Telecommunication Arts. "If you talk to teachers or survey them, there are very few who would say after 10 years that

they are happy with what they're doing in the profession or would do it again."

It is no surprise that a shortage of qualified teachers faces school systems around the nation, and all indications point to it getting worse, not better.

Part of the solution to this growing problem is to make the teaching profession more attractive—which means increased professionalization. Talented young people are more likely to be attracted to a career in which they have opportunities to be creative, to take on additional responsibilities, and to be recognized as outstanding when they deserve it. And talented teachers are more likely to stay in their jobs when the schools and programs described here are no longer unusual. As Abe Ruda, UFT district representative for District 1 at the time of this study, says, "People need fulfillment on the job. Your work, where you spend many hours of your life, must be something you feel good about."

But the salary issue cannot be ignored, either. Paul Schwarz, first grade teacher at PS 87, argues, "It makes me anxious to hear the distinction between professional self-actualization and salary. I don't think you can separate the two. We live in a society where how much money you make says a lot about you professionally. I think that what we do is very important and that our professional satisfaction and salary are intimately linked."

Compensation for Teachers Who Go the "Extra Mile"

How does one compensate Tony Lipari at Aviation High School for teaching a full load while training an SVA to be a teacher? Or should he get extra compensation? What about the SESP part-time teacher mentors who have only one period a day to work with all their colleagues? What about teachers like Harvey Kave, who gave up countless evenings and weekends to build the shops and labs he needed at Manhattan Center?

"You have to go the extra mile to teach," says Merker. "To a great extent, the contract was developed along the lines of: If this is all you're going to pay these people, you can't demand any more of them than X, Y, and Z. So X, Y, and Z are written in, and you can't force people to deliver beyond that. But if you do exactly what's in the contract, you can't teach effectively. We all know that."

Ruda agrees: "In a philosophical sense, there shouldn't be any additional compensation for teachers who go the extra mile. When you're a professional, that's what's required."

Schwarz disagrees: "Money and prestige go to the people who are farthest away from the children. I'm not tired of teaching. I've been doing it 21 years, and I love my job. But I have insights to offer, and I think there might be some differentiated pay for that effort."

Teachers in these settings suggested some ideas for extra compensation: adequate release time from the classroom; an extended school day (accompanied by a salary increase); better recognition and status both within and outside the school; mini-grants for teachers doing special projects; and more. But this issue will remain controversial until the kinds of efforts that are worth extra compensation are defined—with teachers' input and to teachers' satisfaction.

Harvey Kave and student

Definition of Master or Mentor Teacher

The SVA Program has just begun to confront this issue head on. As experienced mentor Lipari says, "The key is having the right people in charge as mentors."

During its first two years, however, the selection of mentors was somewhat hit or miss. Some mentors, like Lipari, were excellent; others were not really suited for this role. In order to formalize and control the selection process, "We will use peer selection," says Ed Espaillat, the UFT vice president for vocational high schools and a member of the committee which oversees the program. "A committee of existing mentors, using defined criteria, will select new mentors." Lipari advises, "Rely on mentors you know are good, rather than principals or chairmen."

Criteria are not easy to establish for selecting mentors in the SVA Program or new mentor teachers in PS 87's Mentor Teacher Intern Program or new SESP teacher mentors. "I think that the key here is using practicing teachers to assist others, not former teachers," suggests Mecklowitz. "This has two outcomes: one, you assist teachers in need; and two, you nurture the mentor teacher."

Schwarz points out, however, that "being an excellent teacher and an excellent mentor teacher are not the same. For Anna and myself, it wasn't only demonstrating our excellence in the classroom, but having proven our commitment to teacher training."

How should this excellence be demonstrated? SESP director Howard Gollub offers this suggestion: "Maybe there are certain standards for what is an effective teacher, certain baseline behaviors that need to be demonstrated. Once done, a person should be given the opportunity to conduct workshops and his or her effectiveness gauged by whether or not peers ask for assistance or feedback."

Merker has a further suggestion: "I think it's important for interns to help create the job description. What do they want or need training in?"

Should some teachers be certified as master or mentor teachers, as recommended by the recent Carnegie Task Force report? While there might be some advantages to this, Merker says, "National or state standards take away the school-based nature of this process. You have to identify within the school that school's problems and needs." Rosemarie Rizzo-Tolk, an English teacher at West Side High School, agrees: "The fear is that you may lose the real mentor by institutionalizing the process."

Ruda offers a compromise: "There are extremes here. There are rigid exams; there are informal processes in schools. I think you have to have both."

Ed Espaillat

How to Involve Teachers on the Periphery

"The people who don't participate [in these schools and programs] feel disenfranchised," states Merker. "I teach at a redesigned high school that opened with staff from the previous school—90% new staff, 10% old staff—and initially the old staff was at the periphery. The new people were people with lots of ideas. The old staff remained by virtue of seniority and didn't have that orientation. Everyone is now involved to some extent or other, but the old people are no longer at the periphery. That's simply because they were empowered like everyone else. They were more cynical and reluctant at first; but they've come around as they've seen that they weren't treated any differently. They had the same mechanisms as anyone else. Given those mechanisms, they came back to life."

Getting more teachers involved has been a slow process for the Project Basics leadership team at IS 115. "Professionalism is a process that takes time," observes Duke. Mecklowitz, who sees mixed results in the District 1 schools, adds, "It's something you work at, in spite of the school boards and the politics, in spite of the authoritarians at the school level."

"We are breaking into new territory here," Espaillat points out, "and with these new benefits come new responsibilities. Maybe some of us are not ready for this yet." Kaye agrees: "My position demands a great deal of responsibility. Responsibility is what makes you wake up in the middle of the night asking: Is everything all right? Some teachers don't want to take that on."

"You have to go in believing that everyone has the spark," says Duke. "You have to look for it, promote it, develop it. You have to be Pollyanna. Some people who've been teaching a long time say: What can you do for me? I know everything! So I say: Great! What can *you* do for me and for your colleagues?" ■

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teacher professionalism, as exemplified by the case studies, cannot be mandated. It can be encouraged, nurtured, allowed to blossom. This process is likely to be slow and frustrating to some, as changes occur on a school-by-school basis. Nevertheless, the following recommendations, distilled out of the discussions with teachers, supervisors, and union leaders summarized in this booklet, indicate the directions in which we must go in order to rejuvenate New York City's schools for both staff and students.

1. A first step must be to remove those conditions which are obstacles to professionalism. Schools ought to be clean, well-maintained environments for teaching and learning. Supplies, equipment, and textbooks should be up-to-date and in working order, and ought especially to be what teachers want and need in order to do their jobs. ("Teachers' Choice," a new program in which New York City elementary and junior high school teachers are each allotted $200 for instructional supplies of their own choosing, is an important step in this direction.) Eliminating the obstacles to teaching must be a priority, for broken windows and a lack of pencils give an unmistakable message to teachers and children alike: "You're not important." But this is a first step only.

2. To encourage teacher professionalism and the professionalism of all school personnel, the Board of Education, the UFT, and the Council of Supervisors and Administrators (the supervisors' union) must be willing to redefine some traditional roles. The Board must learn to trust its employees, to build flexibility into its directives, to allow room for individual creativity. More supervisors must learn to trust their staffs, to share decision-making and other aspects of running schools. The teachers' union, in turn, must build more flexibility into its negotiating stance. As long as the relationships among these three organizations remain confrontational, the role and the rights of teachers will continue to be rigidly defined. Teacher professionalism grows where administrators and staff collaborate, not where they oppose each other. And better schools are the result.

3. Finally, teachers themselves must redefine their own roles, as the pioneers described in these pages have done. They must be willing to "go the extra mile," to participate fully in creating a place where they can do what they joined the profession to do: help children learn and grow and succeed. Extra responsibilities—and sometimes extra burdens—come with the new roles teachers have taken on in the case studies. But so do extra rewards. ■

Michelle Abrams and students, PS 321

FURTHER READING

Academy for Educational Development. **Teacher Development in Schools: A Report to the Ford Foundation**. 1985.

California Commission on the Teaching Profession. **Who Will Teach Our Children? A Strategy for Improving California's Schools**. November, 1985.

Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. **A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century**. May, 1986.

Committee for Economic Development, Research and Policy Committee. **Investing in Our Children: Business and the Public Schools**. 1985.

Darling-Hammond, Linda. **Beyond the Commission Reports: The Coming Crisis in Teaching**. Rand Corporation, July, 1984.

Duke, Daniel L. **Teaching: the Imperiled Profession**. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984.

Feistritzer, C. Emily. **Profile of Teachers in the U.S.** National Center for Education Information, 1986.

Green, Joslyn, Editor. **What's Next? More Leverage for Teachers.** Part of the series **Teaching in America: The Possible Renaissance.** Education Commission of the States, 1986.

Harris, Lou and Associates. **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher 1985: Strengthening the Profession.** Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 1985.

Harris, Lou and Associates. **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher 1986: Restructuring the Teaching Profession.** Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 1986.

Harris, Lou and Associates. **The Metropolitan Life Survey of Former Teachers in America.** Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 1985.

Meade, Edward J., Jr. **Teachers and Teaching: A Look Back and a View Ahead.** The 1985 Martin Buskin Memorial Lecture, Education Writers Association, March, 1985.

National Education Association and National Association of Secondary School Principals. **Ventures in Good Schooling: A Cooperative Model for a Successful Secondary School.**

National Governor's Association, Center for Policy Research and Analysis. **Time for Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education.** August, 1986.

Shanker, Albert. **The Making of a Profession.** American Federation of Teachers, 1985.

Spillane, Robert R. **Agenda for 1986: The Profession of Teaching.** Paper prepared for the National Governors' Association, Task Force on Teaching, December, 1985.

Warren, Constancia. **Teaching in New York City, 1986: A Profession in Crisis.** Exxon Education Foundation, April, 1986.

SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS

Case Study 1:
PS 87
160 West 78 Street
New York, New York 10024
(212) 678-2826
Principal: Naomi Hill
UFT Chapter Leader: Sonia Friedland

Case Study 2:
Middle College High School
31-10 Thomson Avenue
Long Island City, New York 11101
(718) 482-5440
Principal: Cecilia Cullen
Assistant Principal in charge of International High School: Eric Nadelstern
UFT Chapter Leader: Barry Smith

Case Study 3:
Committee of Concerned Educators
Community School District 1
80 Montgomery Street
New York, New York 10002
(212) 577-0221
Superintendent: Bernard Mecklowitz
Staff Development Coordinator: Rick Carman

PS 97
525 East Houston Street
New York, New York 10009
(212) 477-4140
Principal: Louise Burns
UFT Chapter Leader: Phyllis Zayerz
SESP Teacher Consultant: Carol Duke

Case Study 4:
Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics
East 116 Street and FDR Drive
New York, New York 10029
(212) 876-4639
Principal: Patricia Cook
UFT Chapter Leader: John Hitz

Case Study 5:
Special Educator Support Program (SESP)
United Federation of Teachers
48 East 21 Street
New York, New York 10010
(212) 598-9291
Director: Howard Gollub
Assistant Directors: Fran Colletti, Harold Golubtchik

PS 321
180 7th Avenue
Brooklyn, New York, 11215
(718) 330-9395
Principal: William Casey
UFT Chapter Leader: Helen Pearlstein

Case Study 6:
Substitute Vocational Assistant (SVA) Program
65 Court Street
Brooklyn, New York 11201
(718) 935-2259, 2260
Coordinator: Dwight Threepersons

Aviation High School
36 Street and Queens Boulevard
Long Island City, New York 11101
(718) 361-2032
Principal: Robert Grant
UFT Chapter Leader: Tom Halsted

Case Study 7:
The Mott Hall School
PS/IS 223
131 Street and Convent Avenue
New York, New York 10027
(212) 927-9466
Principal: Miriam Acosta
UFT Chapter Leader: Dalma Garcia

Case Study 8:
High School of Telecommunication Arts and Technology
350 67 Street
Brooklyn, New York 11220
(718) 745-4800
Principal: Gloria Rakovic
UFT Chapter Leader: Barbara Vitting

Case Study 9:
Project Basics/Center for Educational Leadership
99 Hudson Street
New York, New York 10013
(212) 219-4557
CEL Director: Askia Davis

IS 115
120 East 184 Street
Bronx, New York 10468
(212) 220-8458
Principal: Ira Goldberg
UFT Chapter Leader: Marvin Sayer

Leadership Team: Gertrude Aybar, Ira Goldberg, Carol Hammerman, Pat Kenney, Susan Lapp, Phyllis Shulman, Norma Smith, Marilyn Spitzer, Charlotte Storper, Kerry Weinbaum, Rhonda Weiner

Further information about this publication:
David Sherman
Assistant to the President
United Federation of Teachers
260 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10010